

SPRING 1961

RELIGION IN LIFE

Vol. 11, No. 1, Fall 1961

A Christian Quarterly
OF OPINION AND DISCUSSION

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RELIGION IN LIFE

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VOL. XXX

Spring, 1961

No. 2

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Editorial

WE PROTESTANTS agree that Scripture never said, "You are justified by theology alone." In a personal relation with Jesus Christ it is primarily the believer's heart that counts, not his head. Many a Christian therefore reacts rather testily when confronted by an array of theology such as we present in our Spring symposium: "What has all this intellectual subtlety to do with the simple gospel?"

No, brothers. Wrong reaction! Theology is not on trial, in need of justifying its place in Christianity. Theology is out to test *us*. Theology is the stubborn effort to meet the real challenges that assail our understanding of the faith, and to face the real anomalies that undermine it from within. Actually, impatience with this task is more often evasion than piety. Much of what we say about our faith is woefully blurred; we cover up our vagueness with some version of the New York cab driver's familiar punctuation, "Y'know-what-I-mean." Sometimes we are worse than vague. For the serious game of life we Christians have often fixed unworkable rules and absolutized them. Or like a clever child on the playground, we make up rules as we go. Or we deal off the bottom of the deck, y' know what I mean. To place under sharp scrutiny all this vagueness and rigidity and fickleness and duplicity in our religion is the business of theology.

Of course, theology is no sacred cow. If it tests us, we also must test it. It's a good thing to tackle both jobs in the company of Christians who, perhaps more clearly than we, are wrestling against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness.

It costs some effort to tune in on the thinking of brethren so far away. Some of these essays may yield their insights only upon rereading. In any case, don't be scared off by strange terminology. "Hermeneutics," for instance. That's only theological shorthand for basic principles of interpreting Scripture.

Beyond the cost is the reward. It is good for us to learn what issues just now are crucial in our brothers' understanding of the faith. It is good to learn how old alignments are changing, and how even theological labels are undergoing alteration. It is good for us to imbibe the theological vitality of our sister churches in Europe. We are not likely to reach "one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth" without working hard to attain one great fellowship of thought.

R. H. F.

New Movements in Continental Theology

I. The Still Unsettled Debate on Demythologizing The Hermeneutical Problem in German-Language Theology

HANS-WERNER BARTSCH

ON LOOKING THROUGH the theological periodicals of recent years, one makes the strange discovery that the discussion of the proper interpretation of the New Testament which was stimulated by Protestant theologians about twenty years ago is being intensively treated in Catholic theology, while in the leading journals of Protestant theology it has been all but eliminated. The way the Catholic theologians are carrying on the discussion, one could conclude that the problem within Protestant theology has been settled. This would imply that Bultmann's hermeneutical program which he suggested in his article, "Neues Testament und Mythologie,"¹ has been generally accepted as the Protestant hermeneutics. In the volumes of Catholic contributions to the discussion² the program of demythologizing was considered the ultimate consequence of the Reformers' understanding of actuality and grace. And Bultmann himself felt he was properly understood by these Catholic writers. Unfortunately, little attention has been given to his article in which he clearly pointed out (shockingly for conservative theologians): "Extreme demythologizing is parallel to St. Paul's and Luther's doctrine of justification without the works of the law by faith alone. Or rather: it is its logical consequence in the realm of historical knowledge."³ From this it is clear that Bultmann, in regard to this subject, feels most adequately interpreted in the monographs of these young Catholic theologians.⁴

¹ *Kerygma und Mythos* I, 4, 15-48.

² *Kerygma und Mythos* V, 1955.

³ *Kerygma und Mythos* II, 1952.

⁴ Franz Theunis, C.P., "Offenbarung und Glaube bei Bultmann," *Theologische Forschung* XIX, 1960.
Jose Ewaldo Scheid, S.J., "Die Heilstat Gottes in Christus," *Theologische Forschung* XXIII, 1960.

HANS-WERNER BARTSCH, Dr. theol., is a minister and Privat-Dozent of the University of Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany. He was editor of *Kerygma und Mythos*, the volumes of discussion between Bultmann, his followers and his critics. Part of this was issued in English translation by S.P.C.K. House in 1953, as *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*.

However, it would be a mistake to assume that Protestant discussion has led to the general acceptance of Bultmann's hermeneutics. The fact is that the discussion has sunk into oblivion without the opponents reaching a proper understanding. While the Lutherans dispute Bultmann's appeal to Luther, his supporters blame the Lutherans for indulging in a Catholic way of interpretation. Neither side accepts the other's criticism. This is a pitiful situation not only for New Testament and systematic theology, but also dangerous for Protestantism because, necessarily, the unsettled discussion will break out more acutely when a new occasion arises. Later in this study we shall see that such a problem has come up already. In this situation it proves much more difficult to keep to the point and not let the difference in understanding develop into a polemical controversy.

I

At the beginning of the debate, there is still undiminished topical interest to be found in the discussion between *Julius Schniewind* and Rudolf Bultmann.⁵ Schniewind did not basically question Bultmann's hermeneutical method, rather, he examined the results exegetically. Having agreed with Bultmann without reservation on the way of formulating the question, he also conformed methodologically with Bultmann in his way of interpretation. To Schniewind the problem was bound up with the proper understanding of the once-for-allness of the Christ event. In connection with this he saw the problem expressed in the relation of the *Geschichtlichen* to the *Historischen*.⁶ By formulating the problem in this particular way Schniewind proved himself to be a disciple of Martin Kähler; he introduced into the discussion the concern of his master.

This discussion was a promising beginning. Yet the heated debate that followed and was carried on in Germany even during the war arrived at a point where mutual understanding became more and more difficult. The documents of this fundamental controversy are found on the one hand in Kinder's volume, *Ein Wort lutherischer Theologie zur Entmythologisierung*,⁷ and on the other hand in Friedrich Gogarten's pamphlet, *Entmythologisierung und Kirche*, 1953. Kinder's reply, followed by Gogarten's second edition of his pamphlet, hardly diminished the mutual misunderstanding. Nevertheless, for the reader, the controversy became understandable as a conflict between two different ways of thinking. In order to

⁵ *Kerygma und Mythos* I, 75-138.

⁶ *Geschichtlich* (historical) means an event insofar as it affects history and also affects my own being. *Historisch* means an event in its actual identity. This distinction was first made by Kähler.

⁷ Ed. Ernst Kinder, 1952.

understand the present discussion we must clarify the difference. Bultmann's existential interpretation is rooted in *geschichtliche* thinking, while the rejection of this interpretation by the Lutheran theologians is founded in "metaphysical" thinking. This is Gogarten's thesis against Kinder, which Kinder was unable to refute.

The *geschichtliche* way of thinking is an understanding of Being which takes individual events as the elements that constitute existence itself. In reverse, it is an understanding of personal existence through the determining factors of history. From this standpoint we must search a literary document primarily for its possibilities of meeting the needs of existential self-understanding, i.e., delve into the possibilities it offers for relating myself to my own being. "Metaphysical" thinking, on the other hand, understands the individual events of history as belonging to a greater pre-existing context which determines these individual events. From this standpoint we must first investigate a literary document for the greater context it implies and whatever doctrine, world view or metaphysics it represents.

While this difference characterizes the controversy between Bultmann and the Lutheran theologians, *Karl Barth*, with his criticism and his unsuccessful attempt to understand Bultmann,⁸ unquestionably stands on the side of the Lutheran theology. To this day the split between Barth and Bultmann has not been overcome. It was renewed when Barth rejected the attempted mediation by the Japanese Yoshimura.⁹ In the final analysis the antithesis between the two is rooted in the difference between the New Testament exegetical method of Bultmann and the systematic method of Barth—who, in spite of all precautions, cannot restrain himself from making direct statements about God's Being. Bultmann states that one can speak of God's Being only through speaking of the human being.

Heinrich Ott attempts to call back to mind the original consensus between the two theologians and to re-establish it. According to Ott, Bultmann is causing the controversy by making a restriction on the statement which both originally had agreed upon. Each had emphasized that it is not possible to make valid statements about God or about human existence because neither are at our disposal; and yet statements about God and about man *can* be made because of God's act of grace, of the forgiveness of sin, and of Christ's resurrection. Now Bultmann changes this statement into the "restrictive-exclusive" formulation: one can refer to God only by re-

⁸ *Theologische Studien* 34, 1952.

⁹ "Eine japanische Stimme über die Entmythologisierung Bultmanns," *Theologische Forschung* XXII, 1960.

ferring to human existence. Barth's criticism, according to Ott, is directed against this restriction. Unfortunately Barth does not offer the needed positive correction, to indicate how one can speak adequately of God on the ground of Christ's resurrection.

Ott has written a thorough study, *Geschichte und Heilsgeschichte in der Theologie Rudolf Bultmanns*,¹⁰ analyzing Bultmann's hermeneutics. He finds the limitation of Bultmann's hermeneutics in the fact that Bultmann puts reflection about existence, i.e., philosophical analysis of existence, first, and the existential reality of faith second. For this reason the reality of faith breaks through, and confuses the existential interpretation. Ott has tried not only to bring his two masters closer together but to remove the contradiction of the mutual criticism. Barth's criticism of Bultmann did not originate in the Lutherans' metaphysical way of thinking; it is an understanding criticism, an attempt to understand Bultmann by starting from the common point of agreement. To reconcile his two teachers, Ott interprets the famous word of Melancthon, "This is knowing Christ—to know his benefits," for the modern situation. In this way Ott, like many friends and disciples, would like to see the true relation of the two scholars brought out. As of today it is not clear whether Barth agrees.

Prior to Ott, *Walter Klaas*, another disciple of Barth, after he had sharply criticized Bultmann's hermeneutics along the same line as Barth,¹¹ made an effort to resolve the controversy.¹² To him the reason for Barth's opposition was the fear that theology might be controlled by philosophy, which would limit the freedom of God's grace. Yet an analysis of Bultmann's theology proves that his conceptual framework is of an essentially formal nature; his theology is not influenced by philosophy insofar as the content is concerned. As Klaas realized, for Bultmann a true understanding of existence can only be achieved in the act of self-commitment. His question to Bultmann still remains: does the openness of the Christian existence include the openness to God's free grace? From the standpoint of Barth's theology, this is the question that may legitimately be asked. Ernst Fuchs, discussing Klaas's study,¹³ has given an affirmative answer to this question. He asserts the opposite of Barth's misgiving: for Bultmann exegesis is not controlled by philosophy, but the systematic theologian must be guided by exegesis.

¹⁰ *Kerygma und Mythos* IV, 1955, p. 126.

¹¹ "Der moderne Mensch in der Theologie Bultmanns," *Theologische Studien* 24, 1947.

¹² "Mythos und Evangelium," *Theologische Existenz heute*, NF Nr. 26, 1951.

¹³ *Theologische Literatur Zeitung* 77/1952, col. 11-20.

II

With *Ernst Fuchs*, Bultmann's hermeneutical program has attained its strongest and most logical application. This is proven by his *Hermeneutik*,¹⁴ the second edition of which was published in 1958, and especially by the extensive collection of his articles.¹⁵ Fuchs understands the hermeneutical problem as a matter of terminology: *what in theology is called Heilsgeschichte (saving history) is actually no other than the history of the word of God with men.* Through the mythos this history of God with men becomes objective, historical, and thus an observable phenomenon. To demythologize, therefore, is to Fuchs the disarmament of this hostile force of the mythos by applying the language of *Geschichtlichkeit* which testifies to the event that God has chosen for himself a congregation in this world. To his congregation he reveals his creating act in the creation, by revealing to it his love in Jesus Christ. This is done by God's spoken word and by man's hearing. As man's only function in this relation is perceptive hearing, as Fuchs puts it, so hermeneutics is to serve only this function. This conception makes God's acting the one and only determining factor. Our assurance that we have really heard can be confirmed only by passing on to others that which has been spoken to us.

The particular character of Fuchs' hermeneutics is seen in his essays on the problem of the historical Jesus. Already in his *Hermeneutik* he had referred to Jesus and his view of time (Jesus refers to the same time that we experience, p. 176) in a direct way that is hardly acceptable to a reader versed in *Formgeschichte* (form criticism of the Gospels). The impression given here that Fuchs does not employ the existential interpretation of the New Testament in the way that Bultmann suggested is intensified by the collection of his essays on the historical Jesus. Here he alludes to Jesus' words, to Jesus' purpose, even to Jesus' self-understanding, as if they were available for interpretation—not taking into consideration that these documents are only the testimonies of those who believed Jesus to be the Christ.

Certainly one can speak of Jesus directly, about his message, and about his challenging call, by using the words of the early witnesses as, for instance, Bultmann did in his book, *Jesus*. However, Bultmann always kept in mind that he was repeating the testimony of the early witnesses while interpreting it. Fuchs has naturally been reproached for reverting to "psychologizing." It is inevitable that one would psychologize when

¹⁴ Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1958.

¹⁵ *Zum hermeneutischen Problem in der Theologie, die existentielle Interpretation*, Tübingen, 1959; *Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus*, Tübingen, 1960.

speaking directly of the phenomena of Jesus' life. However, the discriminating critic will not question so much the psychologizing as such; rather he must oppose the attempt to refer to the events before Easter without taking into consideration the factor of the Easter-faith.

Fuchs' articles are only part of the recent lively debate on the problem of the historical Jesus which has renewed the unsettled debate on demythologizing. However, we must be aware that possibly with one or another of the scholars, as with Fuchs, the problem of the historical Jesus developed directly from his own solution to the hermeneutical problem. In that case, essentially the root of the new discussion on the historical Jesus is not the program of demythologizing but the *Formgeschichte* method. Yet most of the researchers understand the debate in the light of Bultmann's *Theology of the New Testament*. This is true of Hans Conzelmann,¹⁸ when he quotes as the most important sentence of this book, the following: "Jesus' call to decision implies a Christology."

According to Conzelmann, Fuchs has taken up this sentence but modified it in a characteristic way: instead of using the term "Jesus' call to decision," he speaks of Jesus' attitude (*Verhalten*). Should this imply, however, that Jesus' call to decision is understood as an act of the historical Jesus, there is also the supposition that Bultmann's theology implies the necessity to go back to the historical Jesus. This must be questioned. Conzelmann in his criticism is strongly influenced by the suspicions of Anglo-Saxon theology in regard to the *Formgeschichte* method. Apparently he follows the international consensus, stated by him in his lexicon article, "Jesus Christus," according to which the hitherto existing dilemma of the "quest of the historical Jesus" has been removed. However, it has to be stated that this consensus does not include Bultmann. We find that the sentence quoted by Conzelmann, that "Jesus' call to decision implies a Christology," stands in the chapter titled "The Kerygma of the Early Church" and also in the paragraph titled "The Meaning of Jesus for the Faith of the Early Church." The context makes it perfectly clear that there is no intention of going back behind the Easter faith. On the contrary, Jesus' call to decision is understood in the same way as the early Christian witnesses understood it when they heard the Easter message.

Bultmann criticizes Fuchs for his modification of the sentence because of its psychologizing implications. For the same reason criticism has to be

¹⁸ "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus," Beiheft der Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, 1959; also cf. the article, "Jesus Christus," in the 3rd edition of the lexicon, *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*.

applied to Conzelmann's interpretation when he, in his attempt to reconstruct Jesus' teachings, gives primary importance to Jesus' self-consciousness. Besides, he is not on safe ground with his premise for reconstruction of Jesus' teachings. His starting point is to select all words of Jesus that are unquestionably genuine. However, this means to overlook the fact that there is not one *logion* of Jesus that was not handed down by the tradition of the early Christian church, accepted in faith by the early Christian church, and therefore reflected the belief of the early Christian church.

In line with Conzelmann and Fuchs stands Gerhard Ebeling. In his articles as well as in his book, *Das Wesen des christlichen Glaubens*,¹⁷ he describes the relationship between the historical Jesus and the faith as one of continuity: Jesus before Easter is understood as witness of the faith, then in the Easter tradition he is proclaimed as the foundation of the faith; so that, from then on, the witnesses of faith become the witnesses to Jesus. Ebeling's interest in the historical Jesus becomes evident when he says that *in Jesus the faith came to expression*; and this coming to expression is understood as the answer to the pertinent historical question. Yet, this expression of the faith occurred in a historical life—in the crucified Jesus. For Ebeling, therefore, the cross is no obstacle for the faith; on the contrary, since the expression of the faith is fulfilled only in the cross, the cross alone makes the faith possible.

Finally, *Hermann Diem* seems to intend a similar interpretation. We find as the title of an important chapter of his *Dogmatik*,¹⁸ "The story of Jesus Christ who testifies to himself." He uses Bultmann's term, "kerygma," which expresses the character of testimony or proclamation in the New Testament, especially in the Four Gospels. He does this in order to satisfy the need for a foundation in the person of Jesus. In a way similar to Ebeling's he understands Jesus as the first witness and the first preacher of the early Christian message: Jesus preaches himself.

It certainly is right for Diem to say that it was not only Easter, or even the Easter belief, that turned Jesus into the Christ. According to the belief of the early Christian church Jesus was the Christ already before Easter. Yet, by formulating the problem in this way Diem has avoided the hermeneutical problem: he does not investigate how the belief originated that testifies to Jesus as the Christ. However, when asking this question we find that we cannot learn the answer from the historical Jesus but rather

¹⁷ Tübingen, 1959.

¹⁸ *Theologie als kirchliche Wissenschaft*, Vol. II: *Dogmatik, ihr Weg zwischen Historismus und Existentialismus*, Munich, 1955.

from the message of the witnesses of the resurrection: "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon" (Luke 24:34). Thus the disciples came to understand who the historical Jesus is. In this connection St. Paul (Rom. 1:4) expresses it: "declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead"—which almost directly contradicts Diem's interpretation.

Ernst Käsemann assumes a different position.¹⁹ He affirms the findings of the radical critics who say that we can have access to Jesus only by the medium of the early Christian message. He affirms this medium even though the message blocks access to the historical Jesus. However, he does this because the history of Jesus, like all historical events, cannot be preserved by the mere stating of facts but by the very interpretation which the early Christian message gives to the history of Jesus. The presentation of the plain facts does not help our understanding, it rather hinders it. Yet Käsemann does not refrain from investigation of the problem of the historical Jesus. On the contrary, he considers this question a very important one: without clarifying it we might easily fall prey to the docetism of a Greek mystery religion. To prevent this, the writers of the Gospels have told the story of Jesus in historical terms with which we are unable to dispense. As it was in the beginning of the early Christian message, so still today, the identity of the historical Jesus and the preached Christ is constitutive for our faith.

Yet, we have to ask Käsemann if the way in which he has sought to answer the question can be accepted. His premise is, as with Conzelmann, the "relatively safe ground" on which we stand when the tradition can be traced neither to Judaism nor to the early Christian belief. We then are confronted with questionable statements like this: "The paradoxical character of the word proves its genuineness." Just the same, Käsemann is right, and Fuchs, Ebeling and Conzelmann will agree with him, when in closing he says that out of the obscurity of the history of Jesus distinctive characteristics of his message stand out as relatively prominent and sufficiently clear; and with confidence we may add, there are also distinctive characteristics of his work and of his life. But the methods by which these characteristics are evaluated seem to be only "relatively safe," and for this reason not reliable.

III

Considering the character of the sources that are available to us, it seems that the only legitimate approach to the Gospels is to investigate

¹⁹ "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1954, pp. 125-153.

the testimonies that formed the Gospels. It appears not at all hopeless, if we approach the question in this way, that we may arrive at historically relevant statements. In doing so we are employing the existential interpretation within the permissible limits, namely, for the interpretation of the early Christian testimony but not for the interpretation of Jesus' self-consciousness, which is inaccessible to us.²⁰ We must, then, first ask these questions of our sources: what do the witnesses say of themselves? What do they say of the inner change from an unbelieving to a believing insight into themselves? How do they explain this change? And only insofar as we can discover something about Jesus while investigating these questions can we acquire knowledge about Jesus' life. Only to the extent that the original interest of the testimony is conformable with the historical interest can we learn something of the historical Jesus.

We begin our investigation with consideration of the story of Jesus' passion, because through the Easter message the interest of the early church was focused mainly on this part of Jesus' life. The early Christian church had to explain why he, whom she preached as the Christ, had to die as a criminal on the cross. This interest connects, then, the testimony with the actual event. We also make another observation, for which we are indebted to Fuchs: Jesus' passion and death became for the faithful the paradigm of their own suffering and death. With the help of Christ's suffering the Christian was able to understand the fact that his life, materially, was not successful and that his faith did not ensure a happy life—rather, he often had to suffer and die for it. This very observation makes us aware that the proper starting point for our investigation is the testimony of the early church. By phrasing the question thus, we learn that the events of Good Friday caused the breach that is the reason for the discontinuity between the historical Jesus and the preached Christ. By holding to this premise we also learn how the discontinuity was overcome.

When the early Christian church refers to the disciples' lack of understanding and to the Messianic secret, she refers to her own little faith. From this we learn that the disciples did not perceive the Messiahship of Jesus. This is sufficient reason not to try to investigate Jesus' self-consciousness; by this literary motif the early Christian church explicitly testifies that she did not until Easter perceive Jesus as the Christ and, therefore, no Messianic self-consciousness could possibly have been expressed by Jesus before Easter. The problem of the discontinuity can be understood only

²⁰ Bartsch, H.-W., "Das historische Problem des Lebens Jesu," *Theologische Existenz heute*, NF, Heft 78, 1960.

through the fact that, nevertheless, Jesus, in a way quite different from any rabbi, called a number of men to follow him. He called with a compelling power and awakened certain hopes and ideals, which were shattered on Good Friday. Only the two facts, side by side, of this calling to decision and of lack of understanding on the part of the disciples, makes us realize the implications of the problem we are facing today. The only way of solving the problem is to put our question to the first witnesses. We can go back behind their testimonies only as far as they themselves suggest.

By what the early Christian church understood at Easter the breach of Good Friday is bridged: Jesus' call to decision, which once called the disciples to follow him, is understood now as the eschatological call of the coming Messiah. The very existence of the believing congregation sustains the continuity between Jesus' message and the proclaiming of the Christ in the early church. The continuity is rooted in the testimony of the congregation that the decision-demanding call of Christ is nothing else than Jesus' call to follow him. In the light of the knowledge given at Easter, therefore, Jesus' call to decision implies a Christology. Or in reverse: only the Christology enables us to understand Jesus' call to decision fully as decision-demanding call.

IV

While the discussion of the life of Jesus confronts us anew with the hermeneutical problem, it remains closely related to the original debate. This still unsettled debate, however, has come up in Germany in connection with a completely different matter, showing us the urgency of this problem today. It also makes us aware that an unsettled fundamental problem emerges more seriously as soon as it concerns a concrete situation. This was the case in Germany when the churches' discussion of rearmament began in our country. The question became even more crucial during the discussion of rearmament with nuclear weapons. This question led back to the basic hermeneutical problem when, in connection with this, the question of "the governing authorities" arose (Romans 13).

In trying to find a criterion for the proper attitude we become aware that these closely associated questions are all related to the hermeneutical problem. This becomes most evident in the question regarding the authorities. For the Lutheran theology, to which Bishop Otto Dibelius also is obligated, the personal conduct of the individual toward the authorities is to be measured by the dogma of the church regarding the authorities; the teaching of the church is the criterion. There is, then, a certain metaphysical entity, "the authorities," by which I have to test whether or not

the authorities with which I am confronted are, or are not, authorities in the biblical sense. This biblical metaphysics of the State is derived from the corresponding passages of Scripture, among which Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:12-17 are of particular importance.

The hermeneutics employed here is readily understood: a dogma is derived from the text of the Bible and this dogma determines the present conduct. This hermeneutics, rooted in metaphysical thinking, was employed by the Lutheran theologians in the debate on demythologizing. The same hermeneutics determines now the teaching of the church in regard to rearmament and nuclear weapons. Supported by the idea of the "just war," rearmament is sanctioned, just as the use of nuclear weapons is left to the discretion of the military, and the church declines to say a categorical No to the use of these weapons. This very argumentation of the Lutheran theology, as it was presented mainly by Walter Künneth,²¹ proves to the sober observer that hermeneutics within the metaphysical way of thinking is helpless in dealing with present-day problems. A doctrine of the State based on the archaic pattern of political systems that expect only obedience from their citizens is inadequate to advise the responsible citizen of today. It could be misleading, as Christian citizens in Germany experienced in the years 1933-1945. Equally inadequate for the problem of the use of nuclear weapons is the doctrine of the "just war," which also is rooted in metaphysical thinking.

Contrary to this neo-Lutheran position is the rejection of any dogma of the State, which we find expressed mainly by Bultmann's disciples: Helmut Gollwitzer, Götz, Harbsmeier and others. The authorities, they tell us, are simply a form of fellow humanity. In my political attitude, as in all ways, I am to express my love for my fellow man. There is no special political requirement with special authority over me. What is said in the Letter to the Romans and in I Peter is part of the early Christian parenthesis, the intention of which is simply the unfolding of the command of brotherly love. Romans 13:1-7 merely says to the Christian that there is no need of a revolution for Christ's sake. Rather he may be sure that even the non-Christian and the Christian-persecuting authorities can do only that which God's merciful will has preordained. Correspondingly, Revelation 13 is not referring to an anti-Christian State, rather it opposes the adoration of the Beast. As has been recognized by exegetes for a long time, Revelation 13 opposes emperor worship and refers to the State only in this aspect.

In Germany the debate on this subject has risen with extreme vehe-

²¹ *Politik zwischen Dämon und Gott*, 1954.

mence within the Protestant church and actually has resulted in two completely different attitudes in making political decisions. Only the formula of the last synod has kept the two together: "We will remain united within the gospel." However, this very formula calls for a new consideration of the original hermeneutical problem: is my present testimony to be measured by certain dogmas that are derived from the biblical text, or must I pass on to the present listener the interpreted living testimony in the way it reached the listeners then?

—Translated by Hildegard Deuchler
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2. Who Was Jesus? *The Theology of the Son of Man*

MARIA FUERTH SULZBACH

I

ANYONE INTERESTED in contemporary theology will notice little agreement and much disagreement. Apart from the exegetical scholars who have to work with minute details, the principal movers are those theologians whose aim is the interpretation of the totality of the religious Scriptures for the individual as well as for the entire religious community. Their interpretations vary in accordance with the forms of their thoughts and the relationship between the interpreters and their texts. Some scholars use a more anthropological, others a more psychological, and still others a more metaphysical approach. The central figure in all theological discussion is today, as it has been in the past, Jesus, the Christ. The foremost problem of New Testament hermeneutics is posed by the fact that a "merely" historical figure like Jesus of Nazareth became the center of revelation and faith for the Christian religion.

The contemporary situation has become even more confused by the use of such slogans as "the Jesus of history" as contrasted with the kerygmatic image of "the Christ of faith." But there is by now one fact on which all the scholars agree: Any attempt to write a factual history of the life of Jesus which would do away with all kerygmatic or dogmatic overlay is doomed to failure.

After the first World War, Dialectic Theology and the new method of form history succeeded in undermining the reconstructed image of the "Jesus of history" behind the risen Lord; and thereupon many theologians thought this formerly famous concept was dead. In this, however, they erred. The discussion between various schools of thought continues. There is, for instance, the school of radical form criticism, whose followers are

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to be found nowhere outside of Germany and some German-speaking sections of Switzerland.

Form criticism is a philological method rather than a point of view. It was first developed in the field of ancient and modern philology in connection with historical criticism; it was applied to the Old Testament first and only subsequently to the New Testament. Through this method it was possible to discover the formerly neglected preliterate Christian oral tradition which still shines through in the three Synoptic Gospels. Next, form criticism investigated the problem of the significance of the oral Jesus-tradition for the first primitive community, its faith and its life. The relationship between the oral tradition on the one hand and the living faith of the communities on the other is often discussed in terms of the pertinent German expression, *Sitz im Leben*. The critical exegetical scholar is eager to pinpoint the sayings which may have been those of Jesus himself and may have been transmitted through oral tradition. He conjectures that other sayings originated after Easter and stem from the faith of the primitive Christian community. All scholars are in agreement that the Gospels represent a type and form of writing which has no parallel anywhere in antiquity.

Most scholars agree that the Gospels are grouped around a central strand of oral testimony and tradition; that they do not report a coherent sequence of historical events but rather unconnected individual stories, parables, and sayings which owe such coherence as they have to the authors of the Gospels. Rudolf Bultmann, who is one of the founders of form criticism and a radical one at that, believes that Christian faith is faith in the risen Lord and that the quest for the "historical Jesus" is pointless. He contends that "Christian faith did not exist until there was a Christian kerygma; i.e., a kerygma proclaiming Jesus Christ—Jesus Christ the Crucified and Risen One. . . . He was first so proclaimed in the kerygma of the earliest Church, not in the message of the historical Jesus."¹

From this point of view there exists a complete discontinuity between the times before and after Easter. Christian faith starts with the kerygma after Easter. Radical form criticism discards even the possibility of establishing a link between Jesus' own words and the post-Easter kerygma.

Those scholars who make use of form criticism in a modified way follow a different line. "It seems to me," says Oscar Cullmann,

that the time has actually come when the very results of form criticism require us to raise again the question of the historical Jesus. . . . The knowledge that the Gospels are confessions of faith and that the early Church's faith in Christ is the real creator

¹ Bultmann, Rudolf, *Theology of the New Testament*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951, Vol. I, p. 35.

of the Gospel tradition does not justify an absolute historical scepticism which refuses to use these confessions of faith as historical sources at all."²

In order to point to a possible continuity in the structure of the post-Easter kerygma and the words which Jesus spoke himself, Cullmann for instance tries to examine the Gospel tradition so that we may "distinguish between the places where the Gospel writers obviously express their own view and the places where they report the words of Jesus himself."³ This method may help one even to arrive at Jesus' "self-consciousness." The self-consciousness of Jesus is seen as one of the most important aspects of continuity between the "historical Jesus" and the faith of the primitive post-Easter community.

In other words: Is there a coincidence, and how close is it, between the titles by which Jesus described himself on the one hand and those Christological titles which are currently used after Easter by the first community when it refers to the risen Lord?

Mark 10:45 and Mark 8:13 are the most important Gospel passages in the discussion related to Jesus' self-consciousness. Here Jesus speaks of himself as "Son of Man" (*barnasha*) and "Suffering Servant of God" (*ebed Yahweh*).

II

The term "Son of Man" goes back to Jewish apocalyptic thought. In late Judaism the figure of the Son of Man appears as the hidden Messiah who, at the end of time, will come to judge men and rule over the world. This expectation of the future coming of the Son of Man seems to have been current in esoteric Jewish circles (Dan. 7, Ethiopic Book of Enoch). It had no influence on the national Jewish messianic ideas as found in the rabbinic literature at those times. The esoteric groups of late Judaism which account for the various apocalyptic writings transformed the national this-worldly conception of the Messiah into the transcendental figure of the Son of Man.

The concept of the "original man" is not a Jewish creation. It has existed everywhere in the Near East. The great prophetic movement in Judaism severed all ties with other Eastern religions. But the "original man" became the eschatological figure of the Son of Man as it occurs in Daniel and other apocalyptic writings. In these the coming of the Son of Man in the future refers to the end of the pagan secular empires and the dawn of the Kingdom of God. However, the Jewish concept of the

² Cullman, Oscar, *The Christology of the New Testament*, The Westminster Press, 1959, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*

eschatological Son of Man (Daniel, Enoch, IV Ezra) does not imply the concept of incarnation. To quote Cullmann, it is not "necessary that the Heavenly Man himself become a man among men. Even the Son of Man returning on the clouds of heaven does not fully enter into humanity."⁴

Few problems of New Testament scholarship have led to as much controversy as the question whether Jesus described himself as the Son of Man. The majority of scholars who belong to the school of radical form criticism believe that this Christological title is not one of Jesus' *ipsissima verba* but was introduced by the evangelists. The scholars who are opposed to this interpretation emphasize the fact that the evangelists use this title when they make Jesus speak for himself. If they should be right, the use of the title "Son of Man" would lead back to words which Jesus used himself and would precede the primitive community.

When Jesus combines the two concepts of Suffering Servant (*ebed Yahweh*) and Son of Man (*barnasha*) in Mark 8:31 and 10:45, the question arises whether late Judaism knew of any doctrine which combined the suffering and death of the Servant of God with that of the Messiah. Most Jewish scholars believe that no concept of the national Messiah as a figure of vicarious suffering can be found anywhere; and that there occurs no passage in the entire apocalyptic literature where the Son of Man is expected to suffer and to die as an atonement for the sins of man.⁵

Late Judaism presents two kinds of messianic expectation. In the older one the Messiah was a this-worldly figure; its overtones were national and political. The later concept had its origin mainly in apocalyptic circles. Here we find reference to the Son of Man. The ancient national idea of the Messiah is sometimes associated here with the concept of the Son of Man; but the principal emphasis is always on the universal, cosmic, and transcendent aspect of the figure of the Son of Man whose arrival will establish the new aeon and the Day of Judgment. The Son of Man is most frequently mentioned in the apocalyptic writings of Enoch, Ezra, and Baruch. This literature was well known and was widely read in Galilean circles in which apocalyptic and eschatological tendencies were strong. The youthful Jesus and his disciples must have been familiar with the concept of the Son of Man.

When Jesus uses this title of himself, he is dissociating himself from the ideas and expectations of popular Jewish messianism, which were mostly

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁵ Klausener, J., *Die messianischen Vorstellungen des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter der Tannaiten*. Sjöberg, E., *Der Menschensohn im arthiopischen Henochbuch*, 1946.

political, national, and this-worldly. When he calls himself the Son of Man he introduces a new concept which differs from the Jewish image of the Son of Man and the Jewish image of the Messiah. "The synagogue of ancient times knows of a Messiah who suffers but does not die ;and it knows of a Messiah who dies, but of whom it is not said that he must suffer."⁶

Recent research into the various religions of the Near East has led to the conclusion that the concept of the Son of Man is a composite whole of, firstly, the oriental concept of primordial man (*anthropos*) and second, the concept of the eschatological Savior. This concept entered into Judaism where it was merged with the idea of the Messiah. The Jews adjusted the concept of the *Anthropos* to the doctrines of their faith. When the Son of Man was identified with the Messiah the emphasis was placed on the eschatological character of the latter. In Judaism the Son of Man is a purely eschatological being.

It has already been mentioned that in contemporary New Testament scholarship one of the most controversial problems is the question if and when Jesus referred to himself as the Son of Man. It appears that he made use of this title in an ambiguous way. He was very eager to avoid all other messianic titles; for the Messiah of the Jews was still in the first place a national and political figure; and the rulers of the country in which Jesus moved and taught were the Romans, who hit hard when they thought that a new revolutionary leader might be in the making.

A distinction can be drawn among the numerous passages in the Synoptic Gospels where Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man, between those where he refers to his present task and those in which he speaks of his eschatological work in the future. Cullmann is convinced that the first to introduce this title were not the evangelists. He asks:

Why do they [the evangelists] use it only when they represent Jesus himself as speaking? They themselves never call him by this name and they never report another's doing so in conversation with Jesus. This would be completely inexplicable if they were really the first to attribute the title to Jesus as a self-designation. Actually, they have preserved the memory that only Jesus himself used it in this way.⁷

Referring to the two concepts, Son of Man and Suffering Servant, each of which had an independent origin, Cullmann emphasizes that Jesus "united these two apparently contradictory tasks in his self-consciousness, and that he expressed that union both in his life and teaching."⁸

⁶ Strack, H. L., and Billerbeck, P., *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 1922-1928, Vol. II, pp. 273ff.

⁷ Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

Summing up what has been said in this paper concerning the concept "Son of Man," it is evident that the two titles *barnasha* and *ebed Yahweh* are the focal points in every description of Jesus' self-consciousness. If Jesus, as Cullmann and others believe, thought of himself as the Son of Man who "came not to be served but to serve . . ." and who "must suffer many things" (Mark 10:45, Mark 8:31), then it is possible to conceive of a continuity between Jesus and the kerygma of primitive Christianity.

A study of the background of all the Christological titles, as used in the New Testament, should therefore contribute greatly to the clarification of the different attitudes of exegetical and theological scholarship. It should clarify both the concept of discontinuity between the historical Jesus and the post-Easter kerygma, and the opposed concept of continuity of Jesus' self-understanding with the kerygma of the primitive community after Easter.

III

This book by Oscar Cullmann is one of the most enlightening volumes of those which deal with these Christological titles. He points out that the Christological titles are used in the New Testament to clarify the work and personality of Jesus; but that in the history of dogma, the same titles are used to describe the nature of Christ.

Cullmann's method is that of a modified form history. He proceeds phenomenologically and analyzes each title. All the titles existing in the New Testament are used to point to the uniqueness of Jesus. All of them had been used before, either in Judaism or in other neighboring religions. He writes in the great tradition of both historical and theological scholarship which in Europe goes back to the middle of the nineteenth century.

What makes his book so unusual and outstanding is his beautifully balanced attitude. Most books dealing with the New Testament carry what their authors consider to be "profound methodological observations" which are supposedly needed for coming to grips with the New Testament's way of thought. Cullmann takes a different view. He explains that it was just as difficult for the early Christians as it is for us to believe "that the center of all divine revelation is found in Jesus' earthly life and death." "Even today there is no other 'method' of Christological perception besides the one given in John 5-8."⁹

According to Cullmann the title of "prophet" was the first among the Christological titles assigned to Jesus. But this title never became important and vanished at an early date. Since it describes Jesus only as

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

a preacher and ignores his character as the Christ following his resurrection, it survived only with the Ebionitic Christian sect.

Cullmann deals at great length with the Christological titles of Suffering Servant and Son of Man. He is convinced that both of them were used by Jesus himself; that Jesus thereby had two ways of expressing his attitude toward his task. He would appear "(1) in glory at the end of time—a thought familiar to the expectation of the Son of Man in certain Jewish circles: (2) in the humiliation of the incarnation among sinful men—a thought foreign to all earlier conceptions of the Son of Man."¹⁰ The messianic designation of "Christ" prevailed at the time when the Gospels were composed. But when the Gospels let Jesus speak of himself as the Son of Man (*barnasha*), they continue an "already established tradition that Jesus called himself by that name."¹¹ And Cullmann adds that Jesus was conscious of fulfilling a double function of Servant and Son "in the complete and unique oneness with God which he experienced continually and in a manner beyond all human possibilities as the 'Son'."¹² This is Cullmann's final conclusion.

He next discusses the place of the *Kyrios* title ("Lord") in New Testament Christology. Here again he takes a different position from that of Bultmann. Bultmann believes that a complete gap exists between the Palestinian Church and Hellenistic Christianity. Cullmann on the other hand believes that there is a "real foundation for a linguistic connection between the Aramaic *Mari*" and "the application to Jesus of the Hellenistic use of the *Kyrios* and of the *Kyrios* passages in the Septuagint . . ." ¹³ He traces the title *Kyrios-Mari* back to the *Maranatha* prayer which existed already in the Palestinian Church: "Lord, come." Confession and prayer are closely connected in the early Church. Every confession includes a prayer. And though the confession, "*Kyrios Christos*," was first used in the Greek-speaking Church as a counterpart to confessions of non-Christian *Kyrioi* and to that of "*Kyrios Kaisar*," (Caesar is Lord), it goes back to the Palestinian prayer, *Maranatha*. In concluding the chapter on the title *Kyrios*, Cullmann emphasizes the "central place" of the *Kyrios* concept "in the historical development of a total Christological view in the life and thought of the first Christians."¹⁴

In his summing up Cullmann stresses the fact that, in the light of the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 318.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

New Testament, only "functional Christology" can exist. He concludes that "all Christology is *Heilsgeschichte*, and all *Heilsgeschichte* is Christology"; and that if the concept of revelation is based on "Jesus' human work," "creation and redemption cannot be separated." For "Christ's atoning death has cosmic results, and the present *Kyrios Christos* reveals himself not only as Lord of the Church but also as Lord of the cosmos."¹⁵

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

3. French Protestant Theology Today

GEORGES CRESPLY

IN THE PERIOD between the two world wars the "theology of crisis" was of great importance in French Protestant theology. The work of Karl Barth, following that of Kierkegaard, had been a challenge to transform the old orthodoxy as well as the young liberal movement. The resulting theological, liturgical, ecclesiastical and philosophical renewal affected practically all the thinkers of that time.

Since the last war, a period of searching examination and assimilation has begun. Theology has become more "scientific" and less argumentative; thus the conflict between the liberals (W. Monod) and the Calvinists (Lecerf) and Barthians (P. Maury) has been less acute, and scholarly research has been more important than in the preceding period. In Italy, on the other hand, the theology of crisis still marks present-day thinking, because it has penetrated at a slower pace. As soon as the war was over, French theologians renewed connections with German and Anglo-Saxon movements; they have been working in a more ecumenical perspective than in the past.

We ought equally to note that the presence of a living Catholicism in France, which is open to Protestant theological influences, has been a very provocative element for French thought. At present, in theological research it is not so much a question of disputes between the schools (as it is in Germany and Italy) as of the constructive building up of theology. Thus Bultmann has not provoked in France the debates he has provoked in Germany. The traditional French spirit is that of clarity and equilibrium; it seems that the theologians of France have found again these qualities. Therefore, side by side with those works of the preceding period still extant in late editions which maintain an argumentative attitude, we have seen works appearing in the last twenty years which have striven more for harmony and express neither the more narrow confessional theology nor the *rabies theologica*. It is necessary to keep in mind these preliminary remarks as one reads the rest of this article.

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In Italian theology it may be observed that the concrete problems of the relation between Church and State occupy a much larger place than in French theology. This is because Protestantism in Italy is wrestling for its existence, whereas Protestantism in France is wrestling for its dissemination. In the following pages, the most important works of the last twenty years have been classified under the various theological disciplines as an aid to the reader. It will seem that many of the works are translations from German. The translations from English (Niebuhr in particular) have not been indicated, since they are so well known to American readers.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The principal writings of church historians have been concerned with the Reformation, its champions, their works and their thought. This return to the sixteenth century is not an archaism; on the contrary it affords in the contemporary ecumenical context a better understanding of its sources and thus makes the French church's position more precise vis-à-vis other confessions. On the other hand, writings in this field have been popularized, and this has given to many laymen a new appreciation of church history. Important contributions were made to this field in the form of numerous publications during the celebration of the fourth centennial anniversary of The French Reformed Church; these were reviewed by Dean J. Cadier in *Etudes Théologiques et Religieuses*.¹

In *La pensée de la Réforme*,² H. Strohl has made an effort to show that the divergences between the Reformers were less profound than they themselves believed; this book is a happy contribution to the ecumenical discussions. *Luther, essai biographique*, by A. Greiner,³ at its title indicates, is essentially biographical and especially addressed to French Protestant people. *Calvin, sources et évolution de sa pensée religieuse*, by F. Wendel,⁴ is the first book of any importance in French in the last twenty years on Calvin and his theology. The first part of the book deals with the life of Calvin; in the second part, on the history of dogma, Wendel follows the plan of the Institutes and gives an exposition of the principal points of Calvin's thought. One of the principal values of this book is the objectivity of the author, who treats the subject without either a Calvinistic or a Catholic apriori. *Calvin, l'homme que Dieu a dompté*,⁵ is addressed to laymen in the

¹ Montpellier, 1960/3.

² The Thought of the Reformation; Delachaux et Niestlé, 1951.

³ Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1956.

⁴ Presses Universitaires de France, 1950.

⁵ Calvin, the man whom God mastered; Labor et Fides, 1958.

French Protestant churches. Here Calvin does not appear as austere as he often did in other books, but is shown more as a man who was struggling for the glory of God. We will cite also *Genève, citadelle de la Réforme*, by D. Buscarlet,⁶ and *Brève histoire du Protestantisme*, by J. Courvoisier.⁷

Visages du Protestantisme français, by Lestringant,⁸ is an important book which presents the situation and the problems of contemporary French Protestantism. It relates the history of the three great branches of Protestantism in France: the Reformed Church, the Lutherans, and the Baptists. This book contains the most complete statistical information on French Protestantism. M. Lestringant works in relation with the young Society of Sociology of Protestantism, under the direction of R. Mehl at Strasbourg.

PASTORAL THEOLOGY

We owe thanks to the movement *Eglise et Liturgie* (Church and Liturgy), to the school of Neuchâtel (Switzerland), to the brothers of Taizé, and to the review *Verbum Caro* (The Word Made Flesh), for the important work they have done in the field of practical theology. Several of their projects and liturgies have been edited and made available to the church. Some of the more important works in this field are mentioned here.

First there is *La Confession*, by M. Thurian.⁹ In treating this problem Thurian, a brother at Taizé, begins by recalling Calvin's attitude toward confession. For Calvin confession had only a "medicinal" value, and the pastor in his words of absolution could only attest to the power of God. But confession, and more precisely the absolution, is for Thurian a sacrament which confers grace *ex opere operato*. This return to a Roman Catholic conception of the sacraments has naturally caused some comment.

Traité de Liturgique, by R. Paquier,¹⁰ a book unique in French, treats all the liturgical aspects of each service in the French Reformed Church. This author, the initiator of the Church and Liturgy movement, has a very high conception of the liturgy in the church. He is against the abuse of the word in connection with the Reformed services, and wishes for a return of more symbolism in the liturgy—such as the use of colors, lights, antiphonal responses, and more frequent celebration of the Eucharist. This violent reaction against individualism in the service and against a certain poverty in the Reformed liturgy has made a serious contribution in this area.

⁶ Geneva, 1959.

⁷ Delachaux et Niestlé, 1952.

⁸ Tournon, 1959.

⁹ Delachaux, 1953.

¹⁰ Delachaux, 1954.

In *Verbum Caro*, 1956, J.-J. von Allmen of Neuchatel published two interesting and very complete articles about preaching and the life of the pastor. We must also list *Doctrine de la cure d'âme*, by E. Thurneysen.¹¹ This translation from German is very important because it deals with the cure of souls, a subject not covered by any French writer.

DOGMATICS

Very important translations and revised editions have been issued in the field of dogmatics. Luther's works have been published in French by *Labor et Fides* at Geneva. The same editors published from 1955 to 1958 the Institutes of Calvin in modern French and also *La vraie façon de réformer l'Eglise* (the true way of reforming the Church). Also a critical edition of the Institutes with an introduction, notes, and variant readings, by J. D. Benoit, has been published by *Vrin* from 1957 to 1960. The translation of Karl Barth's Dogmatics is being published by *Labor et Fides*; the tenth volume has just appeared. The theology of Karl Barth has definitely marked the language of dogmatics in France. His friends and disciples have presented most important works, such as *La Prédestination*, by Philippe Maury.¹² In this book the author tries not to treat predestination in philosophical categories, but sees it in the perspective of the love of God. According to the christological doctrine of election, Jesus Christ is at the same time the one who is rejected and the one who is elected by God. In him the predestination of man is realized. We must cite also *L'eschatologie*, by the same author, 1959.

A significant work is *Héritiers de la Réformation*, by J. de Senarclens.¹³ In the first volume, called *Le point de départ de la foi*, the author, a Barthian, tries to underscore the unique point in the life of the faith—the revelation of God in Jesus Christ—in opposition to the Catholic position, represented by St. Thomas in particular, and to that of liberal neo-Protestantism, which both rely on revelation *and* natural or human reason. In the second volume, *Le centre de la foi*, the author criticizes those who have added to the faith, such as the Roman Catholics with the doctrine of Mariology, and neo-Protestantism with its emphasis on conscience, intuition, or reason.

Other books less attached or even opposed to the Barthian school have appeared from other authors. *L'institution et l'évènement*, by J. L.

¹¹ Delachaux, 1958.

¹² Labor, 1957.

¹³ Heirs of the Reformation; Labor, 1956.

Leuba,¹⁴ treats the two modes in which the work of God is found in history and gives life to the world. There is the mode called "horizontal," the institution which shows a certain continuity in history: the people of Israel, the life of Jesus Christ the Messiah, the twelve apostles. The vertical mode has cut into this line of historical events, with such interventions as the prophets, the cross of Christ, Easter and Pentecost. The author shows how these specific events give value to the institution.

Etudes calvinistes, by A. Lecerf,¹⁵ fourteen studies published after the death of Lecerf, treat Calvinism as a universal principle like Catholicism. *Foi et Vérité*, by A. Lemaitre,¹⁶ is a liberal systematic history of dogma, treating in a very complete way Lemaitre's theology of religious experience. *La Royauté de Jésus Christ*, by J. Bosc,¹⁷ attempts to base Christology on the theme of the *basileia tou Christou* (the kingdom of Christ), and draws ecclesiological and ethical consequences from that theme. We must list also several works of dogmatics and ethics by Oscar Cullmann: *Christ et le Temps*, *Immortalité de l'âme et resurrection des morts*, *Dieu et César*.¹⁸

OLD TESTAMENT

As in other disciplines, the theology of the Old Testament written in French is very dependent on the work done in Germany during the last twenty years. However, thanks to the translations and works of theologians, this discipline has not been neglected. More and more interest has been shown in Old Testament study. If *Labor et Fides* has edited commentaries addressed more to laymen, all the important scholarly works have been put out by Delachaux et Niestlé.

Theologie de l'Ancien Testament, by Edmund Jacob,¹⁹ a professor of Strasbourg, is unique in Old Testament literature in France. It is really a *Summa* offered not only to the specialists but to all those who wish a better comprehension of the Old Testament. In three long sections, the author shows the characteristic aspects of God in the Old Testament, the actions of God, and finally the struggle and final victory of God. All through this book the author points out that Old Testament theology cannot neglect the history of the period, since the God of Israel is a God who reveals himself

¹⁴ The institution and the event; Delachaux, 1950.

¹⁵ Delachaux, 1950.

¹⁶ Labor, 1954.

¹⁷ Labor, 1958.

¹⁸ All published by Delachaux et Niestlé. *Christ and Time*, The Westminster Press, 1950. *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?*, The Macmillan Company, 1958.

¹⁹ Delachaux, 1956. *Theology of the Old Testament*, Harper & Brothers, 1958.

in history. Another significant book is *Dieu à l'image de l'homme*, by A. Michaeli.²⁰

De la mort à la resurrection d'après l'Ancien Testament is a study by R. Martin-Achard.²¹ After explaining the notions of life and death in the Old Testament, the author shows the evolution of the notion of resurrection in Israel by exegetical study of the texts taken in chronological order. In the last part, he depreciates the importance of outside influences on Israel in order to show the value of the unique revelation of God in his victory over death. We shall list also from the same author, *Israel et les nations* (1959); and *L'homme dans l'Ancien Testament*, by G. Pidoux (1953).

Taking a different perspective from that of the traditional exegetical and theological studies of the Old Testament, there is the Christocentric school which explains the Old Testament by the revelation found in the New. W. Vischer, professor at the Seminary of Montpellier, has been one of the primary exponents of this theology. Most of his works were written first in German, but the editors of Delachaux et Niestlé and of Labor et Fides have translated them. Among the best known is *L'Ancien Testament témoin du Christ*, composed of two volumes, *La loi ou les cinq livres de Moïse*, and *Les premiers prophètes*.²² In the same school one should cite Suzanne de Dietrich, Roland de Pury, and Daniel Lys. The last-named author published in 1959 an important work on the notion of *nephesh* (soul) in ancient Israel. M. Lys is going soon to McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago to teach Old Testament.

L'Ancien Testament dans l'Eglise, by S. Amsler,²³ is a very useful contribution toward preaching the Old Testament. After showing how the Old Testament is continually cited in the New, the author indicates that the Old Testament ought to be understood through a "typology" pointing to Jesus Christ. For Christ came to give to the incomplete events of Old Testament salvation-history a definite and final meaning.

NEW TESTAMENT

In this field it is undeniable that the most important works have been the biblical commentaries. There are two great collections: the Commentaries on the New Testament published by Delachaux et Niestlé, and the collection published by Labor et Fides. The latter cannot be called a

²⁰ *God in Man's Image*; Delachaux, 1950.

²¹ Delachaux, 1956.

²² *The Old Testament, witness to Christ*: (1) *The Law or the Five Books of Moses*, (2) *The first prophets*.

²³ Delachaux, 1960.

"scholarly" series, but is very useful for preaching. We should note *L'Evangile du Royaume*, by H. Roux; *Le Fils de Dieu*, by Dehn; *Les Actes des Apôtres*, by W. Lûthi; *Commentaire de l'Épître aux Philippiens*, by K. Barth; *Dieu nous parla* (on Hebrews), by Javet; *Les Épîtres pastorales*, by H. Roux.

The works published by Delachaux et Niestlé fill an empty place in the theological thinking of France, for they possess all the qualities of the scholarly mind. Already published are a commentary on Romans by F. J. Leenhardt, commentaries on Corinthians and Hebrews by J. Hering, on Galatians and Philippians by Bonnard, on Ephesians, Colossians and Thessalonians by Masson. In the field of pure exegesis there is little to report besides these commentaries, with the exception of some articles in different theological journals—among them J. Hering on the First Epistle of John,²⁴ and a study by E. Trocmé, "Le livre des Actes et l'Histoire."²⁵ Finally, we should not forget the *Vocabulaire Biblique*, which has appeared under the direction of J.-J. von Allmen.²⁶

Some of the most important works in New Testament, however, have been in the field of biblical theology. Though it is difficult to list these in order of importance, it seems that the *Christologie du Nouveau Testament*, by Oscar Cullmann,²⁷ ought to be singled out as the most important work. Another work we should cite is the translation of Jeremias, *Jésus et les païens*, in which the author tries to demonstrate that the conversion of the Gentiles was foreseen by Jesus, so that the apostles were not innovators in this field. Also there is the translation of Bultmann's *Interpretation du Nouveau Testament*, and the work of the Italian theologian, Giovanni Miegge, who in his *L'évangile et le mythe*²⁸ gives an interesting introduction to study of the theologian of Marburg.

ECCLESIOLOGY AND SACRAMENTS

The most important literature in the field of biblical theology is concerned with the problems of ecclesiology. There are several reasons for this, among which one may note the renewal of study of the biblical concept of ministry and of ordination by the General Assembly of the Reformed Church of France; also the importance of ecumenical exchange which has

²⁴ In *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse*, Strasbourg, 1956.

²⁵ *The Book of Acts and History*, P. U. F., 1957.

²⁶ *A Companion to the Bible*, tr. H. H. Rowley et al, Oxford University Press, 1958.

²⁷ See article on Cullmann's work; "Who Was Jesus?", p. 179 of this issue (-Ed.).

²⁸ *Gospel and Myth*, John Knox Press, 1960. (To be reviewed soon—Ed.)

forced each denomination to re-examine its own structures. Important contributions in this field have come from theologians of the Faculty of Neuchâtel and the community of Taizé. Among the outstanding works we should cite *L'Eglise et les Ministères*, by P. H. Menoud, and the translation of an Anglican monk's work, *Le Ministère dans l'Eglise* (Gregory Dix). It would be very difficult to list all the studies in this field which have appeared in numerous journals. All these works have had some influence in the church and promoted the liturgical revival.

In the field of the sacraments, there has been a definite tapering off after the numerous studies on baptism which characterized the preceding decades. However, two important studies by F. J. Leenhardt must be mentioned: *Ceci est mon Corps* and *Le Sacrement de la Sainte Cène*.²⁹ The author searches, in an ecumenical spirit, for a new interpretation of certain traditional words such as "transubstantiation."

THE PHILOSOPHERS

Finally we must note that the fundamental meaning of the theological evolution in the West is sometimes better presented by the philosophers than by the theologians.

In particular we think of the last two volumes of Paul Ricoeur's "philosophy of the will" in *Finitude et culpabilité*,³⁰ in which he revises the Greek theme of finitude and tragedy and gives a new emphasis to the problem of sin. Ricoeur is a Professor at the Sorbonne; his thought has its sources in the phenomenology of Husserl and the Christian existentialism of Gabriel Marcel. He envisions a philosophical reinterpretation of certain theological themes, including this theme of sin, which had been the most important theme in theology up to his time. In particular he shows that the old opposition between Greek thought and Christian thought is not as definite as was once believed. Besides this, Ricoeur is interested in the philosophy of history and insists especially on the "tragic" components of our human history, showing that every culture is actually a conquest.

Another important philosophical thinker is Pierre Thevenaz, whose work on Reformed Philosophy will soon be published. He could be considered the chief of the French philosophers, who are less attached to the traditional formulas, less prisoners of the disputes between various schools

²⁹ This is my Body; The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

³⁰ Finitude and Guilt; Paris: Aubier, 1959-60.

of thought, than the dogmaticians tend to be. He has reinterpreted and plumbed to the depths the idea of "reflective" philosophy initiated by Descartes, in order to show the legitimacy and the limits of the power of reason. For him, philosophy has its own proper field, in which it cannot be restricted by the scruples of theology. But this field is limited by the exercise of reason, and reason itself ought to be considered as submitting itself to an order which it does not possess or control. The reformed philosophy of Thevenaz underlines the full expression of liberty and the full submission of reason.

4. Swedish Theology From Nygren to Wingren

BERNHARD ERLING

SWEDISH THEOLOGY has during the past decades aroused interest throughout the theological world. Nathan Söderblom was the first Swedish theologian to become widely known outside his own country. His research in the history of religions in Paris, his brief professorship at Leipzig prior to World War I, his ecumenical labors, and his Gifford lectures, *The Living God* (London, 1933), with which he was engaged at the time of his death, all served to bring to the notice of the world a new center of significant theological productivity. Söderblom's contemporary as professor of theological ethics at Uppsala was Einar Billing. Billing's major work, *De etiska tankarna i urkristendomen*,¹ was never finished, but its emphasis on the uniqueness of Christianity and its definition of this uniqueness in contrast to Greek thought in terms of a dramatic view of history was prophetic of things to come.

The beginnings of an independent Swedish theology to be seen in Söderblom and Billing were continued in the work of Gustaf Aulén and Anders Nygren, who have taught at the University of Lund. Aulén first became known outside of Sweden through the translation of his study of the atonement, *Christus Victor*,² in which he distinguished what he termed the classic, the Latin, and the humanistic ideas of the atonement. More recently he has exerted considerable influence through the translation of his systematic theology, *The Faith of the Christian Church*.³ Aulén's younger contemporary, Anders Nygren, has, however, been the dominant figure in recent Swedish theology. His book, *Den kristna kärlekstanken genom tiderna*, translated under the title, *Agape and Eros*,⁴ has defined the theological method of *motif research* which has characterized Lunden-sian theology.

¹ Ethical Thought in Primitive Christianity, Stockholm, 1907, 2nd ed., 1936.

² New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951.

³ Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1948.

⁴ 2 vols., Stockholm, 1930-1936. Revised translation, Philip S. Watson, The Westminster Press, 1951.

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Motif research is an attempt objectively and scientifically to define the specific nature of Christianity. The method is applicable in the study of biblical theology and the development of Christian doctrine, as well as contemporary systematic statements of Christian faith and ethics. The validity of this method has, however, recently been challenged by Nygren's former student and successor in the chair of theological ethics at Lund, Gustaf Wingren. Wingren's critique is most sharply expressed in *Teologiens metodfråga*.⁵ It has been difficult for theologians outside of Scandinavia to evaluate the arguments which Wingren presents, however, because the controversy involves the interpretation of Nygren's earlier methodological works, thus far not available in translation, which provide the background against which the demonstration of the method of motif research, which *Agape and Eros* represents, must be understood.

I

In Nygren's first major work, *Religiöst apriori*,⁶ the concept of the *religious apriori* is examined. This concept represents an approach to the problem of the validity of religious experience, comparable to Neo-Kantian attempts to define validity in various areas of experience in terms of the apriori ("that which is presupposed by experience in general"—Webster). The book begins with a survey of recent discussions of this concept. Nygren concludes that there is no agreement as to what the term means, and that therefore those who deny the existence of the religious apriori may simply be refusing to accept a particular understanding of it. Thereupon an historical analysis of the concept of the apriori follows, tracing it through Plato, the Stoics, Neo-Platonism, Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant, to the present. In comparing these conceptions of the apriori, Nygren finds that all of them presuppose a basic factor, the validity of experience in its various forms, theoretical, ethical, esthetic, religious, and whatever other forms of valid experience there may be. The persistent error, however, in most of these explanations of the apriori is that they tend to explain it either psychologically, attempting to account for it in terms of its origins, or metaphysically, which Nygren insists involves arbitrary and dogmatic affirmation of first principles. Only the Kantian "transcendental" approach to the apriori completely avoids these alternatives, concentrating wholly on an analysis of the validity of experience.

Kant's transcendental method may be defined as follows: "That which

⁵ Lund, 1955. *Theology in Conflict*, The Muhlenberg Press, 1958.

⁶ Lund, 1921.

must be valid if experience is to be possible at all is necessarily and universally valid."⁷ Kant applied the transcendental method to the theoretical, ethical, and esthetic domains, but he did not apply it to the religious domain. Nygren attributes this to Kant's deficient acquaintance with religion and states that in order to find the transcendental method applied to the religious domain, one must turn to Friedrich Schleiermacher.

Nygren introduces his own systematic statement of the transcendental deduction of the religious category with the observation that this deduction must differ fundamentally from the transcendental deduction in other areas of experience, where it consists of defining the necessary presuppositions of experience in these domains. This difference is due to the essentially passive or receptive nature of religious experience, as contrasted with the active and productive character of experience in the theoretical, ethical, and esthetic domains. Those who will not accept the presuppositions of the cultural domains cut themselves off from the fellowship constituted by the activity in these domains, which can lead to intolerable situations. This is not the case, however, in so far as religious experience is concerned. Therefore it is not possible to complete the transcendental deduction of religion simply by examining the necessary presuppositions of religious experience. Rather we must examine the presuppositions of the other domains of experience.

When we do this we find that the theoretical, ethical, and esthetic categories or domains all presuppose what might be termed the category of *validity*. This category transcends each of the categories presupposing it. It is not to be accounted for in terms of any of them singly, nor all of them taken together. This transcendence may be seen in its relation to space and time. Truth, for example, the validity presupposed in the theoretical domain, is independent of space and time. The existence of validity presupposes that such transcendence of space and time is justifiable. But this presupposition, by which human life is raised from the realm of the temporal to the realm of the eternal, is fundamentally religious in nature. The eternal, which in philosophical terms is validity raised above the limits of space and time, in religious terms is that which participates in the life of God. There is thus an eternal world which is not antithetical to this world, so that one must leave this world to participate in the eternal. Rather it is the art of piety to seek in all that is and happens the aspect of eternity, and the stronger piety is, the less of the temporal is lost. Thus more and more each moment of life becomes also a religious moment, and

⁷ *Religiöset apriori*, p. 109.

all existence is placed *sub specie aeternitatis*. Religion is in this way shown to be necessary and universally valid, inseparable from the essence of man. Yet hereby nothing is said as to the content of religion. The category of eternity is truly transcendental in that it is purely formal, representing religious experience only in its most general form, under the aspect of eternity.

In *Dogmatikens vetenskapliga grundläggning*,⁸ Nygren draws the implications for systematic theology which follow from this understanding of the validity of religion. He relates his discussion closely to the thought of Schleiermacher. Nygren's problem is to determine in what sense systematic theology can be scientific. He uses in this connection Schleiermacher's distinction between the pure and the positive sciences. While in the pure sciences there is exhaustive description of all the areas of experience, the positive sciences are required by reason of value judgments which provide a new ordering of the content of experience. Theology is such a positive science. The data with which theology deals are also dealt with by other sciences, such as philosophy, psychology, and history. Theology, however, due to the value of Christianity, draws together all the knowledge which will contribute to its scientific illumination, and thus an entirely new science is formed.

The theologian describes the historical religions, which represent the category of religion in its realized form. The transcendental religious category has no existence of its own. It is to be found only in the several historical religions. For this reason Nygren believes that it is possible to trace a chain of necessity all the way from the transcendental necessity of religion, to the necessity of its historical realization, to the necessary determination of the essence of the particular religions. It then becomes the task of systematic theology to describe the essence of Christianity, legitimizing each of its propositions by showing its necessary connection with the center of the Christian self-consciousness.

Nygren does not move directly to such an examination of the essence of Christianity. His next book, *Filosofisk och kristen etik*,⁹ is an analysis of the field of ethics comparable to the analysis of religion described above. Again he finds that the philosophical task in this domain is to examine the validity of ethical experience as such. It then becomes the task of scientific ethics to describe the various ethical ideals which characterize this domain of experience. Nygren does not demonstrate the transcendental deduction of the ethical category in this book, however, nor does he do so in any

⁸ *The Scientific Foundations of Dogmatics*, Stockholm, 1922.

⁹ *Philosophical and Christian Ethics*, Stockholm, 1923.

subsequent writing. This is significant because Nygren's argument in *Religiöst apriori* is based upon the assumption of validity in several domains of experience, which validity in turn presupposes a category of validity, the category of the eternal. If, however, it is not clear as to what is meant by the assumption of the validity of ethical experience, this might suggest that similar problems are to be encountered in the transcendental deduction of both the religious and the ethical categories, which in turn might indicate revisions of the transcendental deduction of the religious category.¹⁰

Except for the essays to be found in *Filosofi och motifforskning*,¹¹ Nygren has for the most part turned in his subsequent writings from methodological problems to the examination of the content of Christian doctrine. The method defined in the earlier writings is presupposed in these later studies, at the same time that this research has contributed to the further development of Nygren's theological method. The chief development has been in the definition of the method of motif research.

By a fundamental or basic motif Nygren means an answer to a question categorical in nature, in which many individual judgments, values, and existential decisions cohere together. The basic motifs, with which Nygren is primarily concerned, are answers to the ethical and religious categorical questions. It is interesting to note that the same motif may serve as an answer to both the ethical and the religious questions. In this way the organic relationship of ethical and religious experience is indicated. The ethical and the religious questions share the common problem of man's relationship with other persons, as well as the more ultimate relationship, which Nygren calls the relationship with the Eternal or the God-relationship. This question of man's relationship in its religious and ethical dimensions has not been arbitrarily chosen. Motif research approaches the historical material with questions defined by the critical analysis which the transcendental deduction represents. Therefore only that which can serve as an answer for such categorical questions can be defined as a valid basic motif.

The motifs which Nygren has defined in *Agape and Eros* are the *agape*, *eros*, and *nomos* motifs, with most of his attention being given to the former two. By the *agape* motif is meant a religion and ethics in which the self-giving love revealed in Jesus Christ is the predominant factor. By the *eros* motif is meant a religion and ethics characterized primarily by man's aspiration for the higher values. By the *nomos* motif is meant a

¹⁰ Such revisions are proposed in my study, *Nature and History* (*op. cit.*), Lund, 1960.

¹¹ *Philosophy and Motif Research*, Stockholm, 1940.

religion and ethics characterized primarily by law and a system of rewards and punishments. In *Agape and Eros*, Nygren traces the history of the Christian idea of love, showing how there has been a tendency to synthesize the self-giving love of the Christian revelation with the aspiring love of Hellenism. The Reformation is interpreted as a destruction of this synthesis, and at this point the study ends.

While there has been considerable application of the method of motif research to various areas of theology by Lundensian theologians, the work that has been done in this regard remains fragmentary. No Christian ethics comparable to Aulén's systematic theology has thus far been written. *Agape and Eros* traces the development of Christian doctrine up to the Reformation, but a similar study of the post-Reformation period has not been completed. Professor Ragnar Bring, Aulén's successor at Lund, has written essays and monographs in this area, as have students under his direction, but Bring has shifted his major interest in more recent years to biblical theology.¹² Nygren also has written more recently in the area of biblical theology. In his *Commentary on Romans*¹³ and *Christ and His Church*,¹⁴ the method of motif research remains implicit, but its use is not explicitly emphasized. This fact has led Gustaf Wingren to assert that in these recent writings the method of motif research has been abandoned.

Such a judgment is possible because Lundensian theologians have distinguished between the method of motif research and the method of the history of ideas. The method of the history of ideas is considered a descriptive method, common to all the humanistic disciplines, while motif research is regarded as a special adaptation of this method in the areas of religion and ethics. Neither method has been subjected to any considerable critical analysis, but there has been a general tendency to use the method of the history of ideas, while the application of this method which motif research represents has been regarded by many as a methodological experiment which the evidence may not in the long run wholly support.

II

Gustaf Wingren tells us how he came to this conclusion. The Lund theology has concentrated its historical research in the patristic and Reformation periods. In this research Irenaeus and Luther have been interpreted as most clearly setting forth the agape motif. Wingren accordingly devoted

¹² Soon to appear in English translation is Bring's *Commentary on Galatians*.

¹³ The Muhlenberg Press, 1949.

¹⁴ The Westminster Press, 1956.

his first research to the writings of these two men. His dissertation was *Luthers lära om kallellsen*;¹⁵ his next study dealt with Irenaeus, *Människan och inkarnationen enligt Irenaeus*.¹⁶ He states that this research led him to conclude that it was necessary to abandon the method of motif research, since it did not do justice to the historical material with which he had been working. It is interesting to note that the difficulty arose, as far as Wingren was concerned, over the relation of the law to agape. Whereas critique of the method of motif research outside of Scandinavia has often concentrated upon the place of eros in the Christian faith, Wingren's critique concerns the relation between law and gospel. He asserts that the dialectic of law and gospel in the Christian faith is such that it is not reducible to one motif.

One can already recognize this critique in *Predikan*,¹⁷ but it is developed in greater detail in *Theology in Conflict*. In *Theology in Conflict* Wingren discusses the methods of Nygren, Karl Barth, and Rudolf Bultmann. The positive evaluation implied in this selection should not be overlooked. Wingren regards the methods of these three theologians as the three most relevant options at the present time, and in so far as he develops a methodological position of his own, it represents use of the biblical orientation of Karl Barth, the contemporary existential analysis of Bultmann, together with some use of the method of the history of ideas to define the nature of the gospel.

The influence of Bultmann is evident in the structure of the book. Wingren deals first with what he calls anthropological presuppositions, going on thereafter to discuss the hermeneutical presuppositions of each of these three theologians. These rubrics are not, however, wholly applicable to Nygren, for the transcendental or critical method, by which the religious and ethical questions are defined and the concept of motifs developed, is not a study of the nature of man. It too is hermeneutical research of a particular kind. God and man are not set against each other in Nygren's theology so that they can be studied in abstraction. Rather Nygren examines the different ways in which the relationship between God and man can be conceived.

Wingren's critique of Nygren, accordingly, rests primarily on the evidence he presents to support his contention that the method of motif research does not adequately interpret the historical material with which the theologian must deal. An important part of this evidence has to do

¹⁵ 2nd ed., Lund, 1948. *Luther on Vocation*, The Muhlenberg Press, 1957.

¹⁶ Lund, 1947. *Man and the Incarnation*, Edinburgh, 1959.

¹⁷ Lund, 1949. *The Living Word*, Edinburgh, 1960.

with Nygren's discussion of Marcion in *Agape and Eros*. In the patristic period, according to Nygren, it is only in Marcion and Irenaeus that the agape type is clearly recognizable. In the Apostolic Fathers, the Apologists, and Tertullian, on the other hand, the nomos type tends to predominate, whereas in Gnosticism and the Alexandrine theology the eros type predominates. Nygren points out that the idea of agape is, to be sure, limited in Marcion. Indeed these limitations are so important and far-reaching that Nygren asks whether Marcion really preaches agape at all. This is due to the fact that Marcion takes the Hellenistic point of view with respect to the three fundamental dogmas of the early church: creation, incarnation, and resurrection. Marcion denies that the Father of Jesus Christ could be the creator of our heaven and earth, his Christology is markedly docetic, and he limits salvation to the soul alone. Nygren concludes:

Like Paul, he (Marcion) knows that the Way of the Law is no Way of salvation; as such it is obsolete, abolished through Christ. But he then concludes that there must be no further talk of law at all. In other words, he has attempted to transform Agape from a transvaluation of existing values into a new and permanent system of values—an attempt which, as we saw above, can only end by destroying Agape.¹⁸

Nygren's reference at this point is to an earlier discussion of the relation between the Old Testament and the agape motif. Here he states that the Old Testament provides the key to the understanding of Christ, and then he continues:

To eliminate the Old Testament . . . can easily mean weakening the Christian idea of love. Agape must, it appears, be seen against its original background, the Old Testament Nomos motif, if it is to retain its seriousness and depth. It is essentially a transvaluation; it is the conquest of Nomos, and exists only in this tension. Agape is destroyed if, by the removal of the tension, it ceases to be an actual transvaluation and becomes a new, permanent scale of values. Against such a removal of necessary tension the Old Testament stands on guard, as the controversy with Marcion made abundantly clear.¹⁹

Wingren in interpreting these passages concludes that Nygren on the one hand seems to say that the agape motif is to be found in Marcion. On the other hand he must deny this because in Marcion the agape motif lacks the necessary background of the law. This means, however, according to Wingren, that the Christian faith is not reducible to one motif. Law and gospel must remain distinct loci, the one derived ultimately from creation, the other being the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins through Christ.

¹⁸ *Agape and Eros*, p. 332.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

Wingren therefore concludes that the Christian faith is not properly understood as an answer to the categorical religious question. Rather it is an answer to the question of guilt which the law poses.

Theology in Conflict became the occasion for a spirited debate between Bishop Nygren and Professor Wingren at the University of Lund on February 7, 1956. The debate was sponsored by the Theological Society of Lund and was held before a large audience in the student union. It began at 7:30 p.m. with opening statements by Nygren and Wingren, after which extended rebuttal continued. There was a brief intermission at 10 p.m., after which the debate was resumed. Finally at 12:30 a.m. the chairman of the meeting declared the debate concluded, though neither protagonist had shown any signs of flagging. The following morning the debate was reported in the Swedish daily press, since it was recognized that a rather remarkable theological event had taken place. The introductory statements were later published in *Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift*, after which two series of replies were also published.²⁰

Throughout the debate Nygren insisted that Wingren was committing the fallacy of four terms in his critique, not distinguishing between law, which properly belongs to the agape motif, and nomos or legalism, which is itself a separate motif. To Wingren's thesis that Christianity is a message of the forgiveness of sins in answer to the question of guilt, and therefore not properly understood as an answer to the formal religious question, Nygren replied that Wingren was not distinguishing properly between a categorical question, which is derived through presuppositional analysis in a given area of experience, and a question, such as the question of guilt, which belongs within a given religious orientation.

Nygren holds that Wingren does not face with sufficient stringency certain basic methodological problems. While on the one hand Wingren opposes the isolation of theology from the remainder of life, he does not discuss the relation of religious experience to other areas of experience, or, as this problem might now be expressed, the relation of religious language to language as used in other disciplines. Philosophy of religion can be used to serve this function, but Wingren regards philosophy of religion as a *special* science, comparable to psychology of religion. It is a scholarly treatment of religion which runs parallel to the theological treatment of this same material, viewing it from a different perspective. Philosophy of religion therefore becomes a discipline alien to theology, and it may not contribute to the development of a theological methodology. For Nygren,

²⁰ XXIII (1956), pp. 20-41, 122-160, 284-322.

on the other hand, philosophy of religion is an application of the *universal* science which philosophy represents in the area of theology. As such it is a method of critical analysis, which is a part of theology itself, at the same time that it provides the possibility of relating what the theologian does to other areas of human thought. Thus Nygren avoids Wingren's criticism that his theological method is derived from a discipline alien to theology, at the same time that he relates theological research to research in the other scientific disciplines.

In answer to Wingren's critique of the discussion of Marcion in *Agape and Eros*, Nygren has admitted that his concluding statement with respect to Marcion needs further clarification.²¹ He regards as unfortunate the fact that he has related the two passages cited above. He interprets the former passage, in which it is said that the agape motif must remain in tension with the nomos motif, as referring to a *psychological* necessity. Both in the New Testament and at the time of the Reformation the agape motif has been affirmed against a background of legalism. The nomos motif can, it appears, serve as a useful background for an understanding of the agape motif. It does not follow, however, that all men must be led to salvation through the route of attempted works-righteousness. If the nomos motif were absent, it should nonetheless be possible to present the agape motif intelligibly and in such a way as to gain commitment to it. There is, however, a *theological* necessity that law must be present if agape is to be properly understood. Just as one must distinguish between the nomos motif and law, so one may distinguish between the agape motif and agape in a narrower sense, as an element together with law in the agape motif. The agape motif includes within itself law over which love predominates. To exclude this element of law would be to destroy the agape motif. Nygren has avoided Wingren's attempts to engage him in a more general discussion of the law. He has answered that he did not make the law the object of his investigation in the writings under criticism, and that therefore a discussion of how the law is to be understood is not relevant to the critique of these writings.

III

Wingren has discussed the general problem of the law in a recent book, *Skapelsen och lagen*.²² Here he seeks to show the way in which creation and law must be distinguished from the redemptive act of God in Christ. His argument in this book may be summarized briefly as follows: Creation

²¹ "Ytterligare till teologiens metodfråga," *Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift*, XXXII (1956), pp. 148-156.

²² Lund, 1958.

not only occurred in the past, but continues as life is constantly being created. The God relationship is therefore given with life itself, and remains even if God's existence is not acknowledged. In creation the individual is placed in relation to his fellow men and to things, and is given a task in the world. Man is used by God as God continues to create, and God's acts through men remain good even though sinful men are his instruments. When God creates by using sinful men, his universal law is in function, for the universal law is God's creative will in so far as it meets human opposition. Everything the law requires has to do with the needs of the neighbor, and reveals itself as external coercion to restrain evildoers and to bring forth deeds for the service of life.

Wingren argues that sin, which is a disturbance of life given in creation, is known even where the gospel is unknown. Since the work of creation goes on constantly, the individual, despite his unwillingness to serve, is constantly confronted with God's activity and the neighbor's needs. He is thereby made aware that there is something wrong with him. This indictment against man is raised simply by the fact that he lives in the world, in constant relation with things and with his neighbor. The indictment and the judgment is recognized, even if God is not recognized. In this way the first use of the universal law, restraining evildoers and bringing forth deeds in the service of life, automatically is transformed into the second use of the law, whereby the individual is convicted of sin. These two uses of the law are constantly in effect. The full insight as to the depth of man's guilt comes, however, through the preaching of the gospel. The second use of the law culminates when Christ is preached. The guilt, which one then clearly recognizes, is, however, the same guilt which one has felt before. It is only deepened and widened to include the whole existence of the individual.

Wingren derives this interpretation of creation and the law from the Old Testament, devoting his attention primarily to the primeval history in Genesis 1-11 and passages regarding creation in Second Isaiah and the Psalms, as well as the interpretation of these Old Testament concepts in the New Testament. He points out that both the Bible and the ancient creeds begin with creation before they go on to redemption, and are not properly understood if this order is not followed. The problem at this point, however, is how the Old Testament is to be read. If it is to be read as history, as a witness to remembered events, it is not possible to begin with creation. Just as one does not view a painting by moving the eye from one end of the canvas to the other, but must look for its focal center, so

history must be understood in terms of its center. History represents the selection of significant events, which may be given both a prologue and an epilogue. Thus in the Old Testament the events of the exodus and the subsequent history of Israel are introduced by the prologue of the primeval history in Genesis 1-11, just as in the New Testament the Old Testament itself is understood against the background of the Christ event. These saving events in turn make intelligible the hopes that pervade the Bible.

Wingren interprets the Old Testament as a record of the acts of God, but he fails to recognize the fundamental difference between those acts which are remembered events, and those acts which, whether presupposed at the beginning or anticipated at the end, represent implications which faith has drawn from its interpretation of the remembered events. When Wingren insists that the objective order in which the divine activity has occurred must not be replaced by the cognitive order of man's apprehension of this activity, he implies that the way in which the Bible has originated is irrelevant to its interpretation. But this means that the Bible is no longer being read as history.

At one point Wingren expresses a fear that if one begins with the election of Israel, one must end with the church, so that the universalism expressed in the doctrine of creation and suggested in the absence of a temple in the vision of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22) is lost.²⁸ But it is through Israel's election that universalism is achieved. Wingren derives the neighbor-love commanded by the universal law from creation. But the neighbor in the Old Testament is found within the community of Israel. He is another member of the covenant people. Concern for the fellow Israelite is an extension of the principle of group solidarity from the nomadic clan to the confederation of tribes, which Yahweh's saving activity has brought into being. Even the inclusion of the stranger within the community of Israel is motivated by reference to Israel's history. The new conception of the neighbor to be found in the New Testament, illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan, where the individual himself becomes the neighbor, responding to human need wherever it exists and thereby establishing neighborhood, presupposes the new community which has been established through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the neighbor who has befriended us, and we are to do as he has done, just as in the Old Testament Israel is to make God's saving activity a model for her behavior.

The religion of the Bible can be regarded as an interpretation of history. The fact, however, that there can be fundamentally different inter-

²⁸ *Predikan*, p. 51.

pretations of history, which interpretations, in turn, are fundamentally soteriological, must be recognized. The motifs represent these different soteriological possibilities, and though they share common elements, these elements are different by virtue of the motif in which they are found. Consequently the law must be understood historically, since it differs according to the motif in which it constitutes an element. The value of Wengren's critique is that he is requiring the Lund theology to draw the implications with respect to its understanding of the law which follow from the method of motif research. At the same time his critique can be made the occasion for an examination of other aspects of this method. Are the three motifs exhaustive of the possibilities to be found in religious and ethical experience? If the agape motif resists synthesis, is it possible that the eros and the nomos motifs may be synthesized with each other? Can the religions of the Far East be adequately described by use of the method of motif research? It is when questions such as these are answered that the value of the methodological tool which motif research represents will be more completely determined.

5. A New Liberal Theology

Fritz Buri of Basel

E. L. ALLEN

WHEN IN POSTWAR BRITAIN Labor won two successive general elections, there were enthusiasts within the party who prophesied that never again would the Conservatives arrive at power. So there have been overconfident theologians who reckoned the prospects of a revival for liberalism as on a par with those of the dodo. But the disappointment is as likely to occur in the one case as it actually did in the other. It is not merely that Bultmann has flung down his challenge to the neo-orthodoxy with which he was once associated, not merely that the influence of Schweitzer is on the increase in Switzerland; in the theological faculty of Basel itself, liberalism has found one of its doughtiest champions in the person of Fritz Buri.

Buri outlined the system that was taking shape in his mind in his *Theologie der Existenz* (1954), and more recently he has given us the first volume of a *Dogmatik*¹ that deserves to take its place on the shelf beside the massive volumes of Barth, the more modest efforts of Brunner, and the acute and original works of Tillich. The *Dogmatik* is offered to the reader as (in the words of the publisher) "the first liberal *Dogmatik* since Biedermann." Three major influences upon his thought are evident, and I propose to begin with a brief indication of what he derives from each and where he differs.

I

1. The first name that should be mentioned is clearly that of Buri's philosophical colleague at Basel, Karl Jaspers. The term "theology of existence" presupposes a dependence of some sort on "the philosophy of existence," and the first of these is not likely to be intelligible to those who are unfamiliar with the second. For Jaspers, the root of philosophy is in faith, but not in faith of a religious order. There is such a thing as

¹ Buri, F., *Dogmatik als Selbstverständnis des christlichen Glaubens. Erster Teil: Vernunft und Offenbarung*. Bern: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1956.

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philosophical faith, and this arises out of openness to all existence and in particular sensitivity to that element in it which lies beyond rational demonstration. It is the encounter of the innermost self or "existence" with the Transcendent. It knows nothing of external authority, it has no body of doctrine with official exponents, and it does not appear in the world as a social force. All these are characteristics of religious faith, from which philosophical faith must be sharply differentiated. Buri accepts Jaspers' account of faith as "a human possibility," as something that belongs to human life as such; only he regards Christian faith not as extraneous or opposed to this, but as grounded in it. It is that specific form of faith that arises when the Transcendent is apprehended as God as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ.

2. Buri's relation to Barth is similar. Those who supposed that the contrast between religion and revelation was crucial for the distinction between neo-orthodoxy and liberalism will be surprised to find that Buri is as emphatic as Barth that the theologian's appeal must be to revelation. Faith is man's response to God's disclosure of himself, "existence" is transformed as it has to do with what comes from beyond the human sphere. There is therefore as little room for natural theology in the one system as there is in the other. There is no way to God by knowledge, but only the way from God to man as he reveals himself and man apprehends his revelation. But then Buri parts company with Barth by his suggestion of a revelation for knowledge alongside one to faith. The former is negative as the latter is positive. That is to say, knowledge, whether it be of the natural world or of man's religious development, whether it be in the form of the traditional arguments for God's existence or the mystic's claim to unity with him, leads us to a certain point and then breaks down. It bears witness to that which lies beyond it but of which it has no right to speak. So doing, it opens our minds to a realm of mystery that is only to be entered by other means than are at its disposal—by faith, hope, and love.

3. The third name that must be mentioned in this connection is that of Schweitzer. For Buri accepts his eschatological interpretation of the career of Jesus and the faith of the New Testament. Further, he follows Werner in his account of the development of Christian doctrine. Here the decisive factor was not, as Harnack supposed, contact with Hellenistic thought. It was the delay in the Lord's return, the failure of that hope of the Parousia by which the first Christians had lived. This hope gave unity to their worship, their thought, and their life, and a substitute had to be found

for it when it decayed. The Church as a saving institution, a body of Christological dogma, and a new law, rendered this service. But Buri criticizes in both Schweitzer and Werner a tendency to fall back upon rationalism, to surrender eschatology as an antique piece, and to find the permanently valuable element in the New Testament in Jesus' ethic of love or in a set of "eternal principles." He himself is prepared to set a higher value on eschatology.

II

Another approach to Buri's thought is by a consideration of some key words of which he makes a frequent use. The most important of these is *self-understanding*. It is easy for the reader who is unfamiliar with existentialism to go astray here. He will suppose that nothing more than a theoretical knowledge is involved. But that, of course, is not the case. Indeed, man is the being who cannot contemplate himself in detached and objective fashion, he must come to a decision about himself and act on that decision. An objective view of himself is in fact a decision to reduce himself to the status of a thing that can be observed from without; a decision, in other words, to be something less than man. To understand myself as a man is to see myself as a being who not merely is but is to be, before whom possibilities open, and to choose between these possibilities. Faith is man's self-understanding, we may say his acceptance of all his experience, as related to the Transcendent, to God. And in Christian faith man takes as the center of his being and his activity the relation to God of which the Gospel of Jesus Christ speaks. Revelation does not add to man's information, it opens out before him a whole range of new possibilities. In more familiar language it is the offer of a new life, and that offer he may accept or reject. It is an invitation to his freedom.

We may take next the distinction between *existence* and *objectification*. This is a theme with which Berdyaev has made us familiar; and Buri also is in sympathy with Jaspers at this point. "Existence" is the self in man that is the center of decision, the knower that can never be known as an object. "It means a selfhood that I cannot demonstrate in scientific, that is, universally valid, fashion either to myself or to another. It is a reality that is disclosed to me only as I become inwardly aware of myself in a process that does not admit of being objectified and through which I become what I am."² Psychology knows nothing of this "existence"; it can only describe those aspects of the self that admit of being objectified. It is not

² Buri, F., *Theologie der Existenz*, 1954, p. 9.

what I possess but what I am, what I become from moment to moment in virtue of the choices I make. On the other hand, the world of objects is one from which existence has been eliminated; it corresponds to what Kant spoke of as "consciousness-in-general," that which is common to all rational beings. Hence the error, for example, in the traditional proofs of God's existence, that would make of him an object of a higher order to be established by pseudoscientific means.

On this follows naturally the distinction between *accuracy* (*Richtigkeit*) and *truth*. The former is the ideal which the scientist sets before himself. His aim is to reach a result that can be demonstrated so as to be acceptable to all who are intellectually equipped to appreciate his argument. He therefore eliminates himself as far as possible, and may even go so far as to replace the human observer by a camera and a measuring-rod. The criteria he employs are the universally acceptable criteria of logic and mathematics. Yet the result he reaches is not absolute but relative. That is to say, it is open to correction by further investigation; also, it is valid only within the limits of his specific enquiry.

The findings of faith, on the other hand, are intensely personal; it is notorious that what convinces you may leave me cold. But they are the response to a reality that lays upon us an unconditional claim. Here I stand, I can do no other. Necessity is laid upon me. Truth is a matter of personal vocation and responsibility, and my truth must encounter your truth, since each must be faithful to the claim of the Transcendent, to the Word of God, as the traditional language has it. We might perhaps follow Karl Heim and say that faith gives certitude as knowledge aspires to certainty.

But how are the assurances of faith arrived at? Here we must speak of *historicity* (*Geschichtlichkeit*). We are not in a position to adopt the advice of Descartes and start from scratch. Each of us comes into the world in a definite setting. I am a man of a certain nation and historical period, born into a particular religious tradition. For purposes such as those of scientific inquiry I may disown this as far as possible, but I must live, suffer, hope, and achieve within this context. Here or nowhere God is to be found and my fellows served. I am to become myself as this concrete person in his actual life-situation. It is as such that I believe and that, if I am a theologian, I must construct my theological system. We are not merely embedded in a tradition, it is embedded in us. Even if we are atheists, we are like the Scots professor who was a Presbyterian atheist. A theology therefore is not an original construction, it is an interpretation

of the Christian tradition in which we stand. However critical we must be of some forms assumed by that tradition, we shall seek to learn from them all and to see in them all manifestations—distorted manifestations it may be—of Christian “existence.”

III

The full title of Buri's work makes it clear that he envisages theology as an attempt at self-clarification on the part of Christian faith. That faith assumes three forms, as the *fides quae*, that upon which faith is directed, the *fides qua*, the personal act of believing, and the *confessio fidei*, the Church's statement of that which she believes. As such it will be the attempt to deal by concepts and rational presentation with that which lies beyond the reach of any such method, just as Jaspers in his three-volume *Philosophie* offers a systematic account of that which cannot be systematized. For theology, like philosophy, is an intellectual discipline and must aim at objectivity. Of course, it is not to be objective in the sense that it rules out all that springs from personal commitment, but in the sense that it brings out the true character of this, guards it against wishful thinking and irrationalism, submits it to searching criticism, and seeks to mediate between the claims of faith and those of knowledge, these being equally legitimate in its eyes. Theology is a work of reason, reason being understood as more than intellect; it is Maritain's “open reason” that recognizes the right of what transcends it.

Theology, as we have seen, does not go to work *de novo*, it draws upon tradition. Nor does tradition exist as something fixed and static, it is only as it is interpreted. What has come down from the past has significance only as it speaks to our condition in the present. The Christian tradition reaches us in the Church as a body of assertions about objects and matters of fact. But these belong to a supernatural world and a saving history (*Heilsgeschichte*). These assertions arose in the first instance out of an encounter of persons-in-community with the Transcendent, and they seek to preserve and communicate what was gained in that encounter. Tradition is tradition of revelation. In the language Buri uses, they are expressions of existence. They appear to give information about a higher world just as the statements of the biologist and the geographer give information about our everyday world. But the modern consciousness cannot regard them as doing so. Generations of scientific development, biblical criticism, anthropology, and so on, have given us a distinction between the *mythos*

and the *logos* that our fathers did not have. The assertions of faith are myth and symbol, they may not be read literally as information about a supernatural world.

Once the naïve consciousness of earlier periods has become impossible, only two courses are open to us. One is that taken by all the traditional systems of theology, even the so-called liberal ones. They attempt in some way to rescue the objectivity of religious statements, to give them a status as near as possible to that of the sciences. This is done in natural theology, in the appeal to inspired Scripture, in the return to the historical Jesus, and so on. The other is the one Buri advocates. We are to accept unreservedly the symbolic character of the assertions embodied in the Christian tradition, whether in Scripture or in the creeds and confessions, and to read these as appeals from faith to faith. They bear witness to what arose in men's souls in the past when they met with the Transcendent, and they have significance for us just in so far as they can make possible for us a meeting with the Transcendent on our own part. Statements about God are invalid when they are taken to describe an object for knowledge; they are valid only in so far as they symbolize an encounter with him from which we emerge inwardly transformed.

What this means may be made clearer in a crucial instance. The weightiest assertion about God in the Christian tradition is that he is personal, he is our Father. On what ground do we use such language of the Transcendent? Do we argue that, since the category of personality is the highest known to us, we are justified in transferring it to God? Or that the evidences of intelligence in nature are such as to require us to predicate personality of the Power behind it?

Not at all, Buri would say. The ascription of personality to God is valid and meaningful only on the lips of the man who prays. This is not an inference from the fact that one prays; prayer itself is a meeting with God as one to whom we say "Thou" and who says "thou" to us in return. This is what Buri calls "the analogy of faith." Man is aware of transcendent powers with which he has to reckon. He becomes a person in so far as he relates himself to these powers as personal, and he relates himself to them as personal in so far as he becomes a person. This is supremely the case in prayer, where a man as a whole self has to do with God as the one on whom he is utterly dependent. Once this has been seen, arguments for divine personality may acquire a secondary significance, as symbols for faith.

IV

Thus for Buri there is no opposition between faith and reason, though there is tension. More importantly, there should be constant interplay. Reason, if it is open, will recognize that it has limits, and will agree that faith should operate beyond these. Faith will call upon reason to clarify and criticize its deliverances, lest it degenerate into superstition or make claims that cannot be upheld. But theology in the last resort is concerned with what cannot be rationalized and objectified, with that which has meaning only in the encounter with Transcendence.

Nowhere perhaps is this more clear than in the doctrine of sin. It is a commonplace, surely, that sin resists any explanation, that it is not to be identified with crime or even with moral misdemeanor. Only he knows what sin means who has bowed in humility and penitence before the holy and all-seeing God. The dogma of original sin is misunderstood when taken as an account of how sin began, for then it fastens upon the race a doom for which men are not responsible; they are victims of Adam's folly. The dogma corresponds to the realization that guilt attaches not only to what we do but to what we are, and that even the good we achieve is tainted and stands in need of forgiveness.

What of predestination? Here, clearly, we have an attempt to explain the ways of God to men that ends by making him a tyrant. The protest of conscience may not be silenced. Yet we have no right to dismiss the doctrine without asking what truth it expressed for the devout souls who clung to it. What does it symbolize for existence? He who knows himself to be standing before the holy God finds that he is at once rejected and accepted, that the purity that searches and exposes him is one with the mercy that invites him to draw near. He is received by God, not on account of what he has done, but in spite of his shortcomings. We are justified by faith alone. The initiative is with God, we have not earned our salvation, we are called to it by God. The consciousness of election is this sense of gratitude for an undeserved goodness. What have we that we have not received? But this must not be perverted into a theory that some are chosen from eternity and others rejected. Further, this gratitude rises against the dark background of one's sense of unworthiness. What right would I have to complain had I not been received? But again, this must not be perverted into a theory that God displays his justice by rejecting a certain set of persons.

For most of us, the implications of this theology of existence for Christology will be of even greater importance. Buri approaches this sub-

ject historically. As has been said, he accepts the "thorough-going eschatology" of Schweitzer and Werner in their reading of the New Testament. According to them, Jesus thought of himself as *Messias designatus* walking incognito among men. The gospel of the early Church was the message that Christ has overthrown the demons and brought in the New Age, to be consummated at his return in glory during the lifetime of at least some among his disciples. Christ was thought of as divine but not God; as the Heavenly Man, a being of angelic order who was transmuted into a man and after the resurrection was exalted to be Lord. As the hope of the Parousia faded, so the Christological controversies struggled to find a new formulation for the dignity and saving power of Christ. The Chalcedonian formula emerged triumphant and held its own till questioned by rationalism and liberalism.

It might seem that the time has come to develop a new Christology, but we are not equal to that. All the modern attempts to construct a Christ-figure that should commend itself to our day only serve to show how sadly lacking we are in the spiritual resources for such an enterprise. We must be content to interpret the traditional presentations—and the modern ones as well. We cannot say that any one of them is correct and the others wrong; rather shall we recognize that each of these figures, these pictures, these myths, conveys one facet of the truth. There is something in each of them that speaks home to us. Had it not been so, would they have reigned so long in men's minds? Yet this recognition of a variety of truths does not end the matter. Where is the truth that is truth *for me*, by which I am to live and die? Buri would say that it is in the eschatological Christ of the New Testament, the Christ who overthrows the powers of evil at the cost of his own life and brings in that New Being for which men have waited and hoped so long.

V

Probably by now a doubt will have suggested itself to the reader of this article. Is this not all so much subjectivism? Are we not back at Schleiermacher's position, where we cease to speak about God and content ourselves with statements about "the Christian affections," or in this case about "existence"? Such an objection is to be expected. But it is mistaken. Buri is emphatic that faith is an encounter with the Transcendent, that we have to do with a reality not of our making. He is only concerned to insist that this reality is apprehended by a process that brings with it the transformation of ourselves. I would myself suggest that the weakness of the system is not that it is too subjective, but that it is too objective. What

I mean is that in his effort to preserve the scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) character of theology, Buri fails to do justice to an equally essential aspect of it, the confessional. Too much is said about "existence" doing this, that, and the other thing, so that the *concept* of the concrete individual tends to be substituted for the concrete individual himself. The theology of Buri does not kindle the reader as the philosophy of Jaspers does. In Buri there is not the same "appeal of freedom to freedom."

Nor am I happy about the emphasis laid on tradition. One gets the impression that the background of this theology is the comparatively secure society of neutral Switzerland with a church that has come down from the Reformation. Has tradition the same role and the same authority in America, or in the New Zealand in which this article has been written? Is not a large part of the world today in a condition of unrest, with its traditions uncertain, with perhaps several traditions in conflict? Granted that we must accept our actual situation as the point at which we are to meet with God, should we not be open to the possibility of entirely new truth? When he raises the question whether there are seven sacraments or only two, Buri decides for the latter, and adds: "This is not our choice. The decision is made for us in the tradition in which we stand, and which we did not choose."⁸ Is this not a regrettable flight from responsibility?

There are other questions that might be asked, but it would be as well not to raise them at this stage, since they may be answered in later volumes of the *Dogmatik*. In many so-called liberal circles, particularly in America, Buri will be dismissed as hopelessly conservative. A theology of revelation and faith, a theology that repudiates the appeal to history and psychology—what has this in common with liberalism, it will be said? In the survey of what the past has to offer, Schleiermacher and Ritschl are treated with the same respect and the same criticism that is meted out to Roman Catholicism and Protestant orthodoxy. Here is a liberalism that is not a modernism, that is concerned solely with truth. On the other hand the neo-orthodox will accuse it of subjectivism, will regard its rejection of natural theology as mere pretense, and will object vehemently to its account of faith as "a human possibility" of which Christian faith is but a specification. They will protest against the treatment of such topics as sin and grace, election and predestination, apart from what Buri terms "the Christ-myth."

As against both these attacks, I should be prepared to defend the

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

"theology of existence" as liberalism and as a form of liberal theology that is appropriate for our time. It does not by-pass the issues raised by Barth, and it deals honestly with those he by-passes. That is to say, it is a theology of revelation and not merely of religion; at the same time it recognizes that the historical study of Christian origins and the development of dogma force on us a more radical reorientation of our thinking than most of us have yet been willing to consider. Now we can see clearly what differentiates a liberal theology from all other types. The others cling still to the notion that there is a world of supernatural objects about which information is forthcoming, so that a quasi-scientific knowledge of them is possible. As against this, it must be asserted that God is accessible to faith alone and that statements about him are valid only in so far as they express a relation to him that transforms the one who makes them. We all want a security higher than faith. We need to learn that there is none—for faith is the highest security there is, since by it God lays hold upon us.

6. *Continental Theology: Does it Preach?*

JOHN MARSH

IT WAS A SUNDAY in January, 1938. I was in a Lutheran church in Hanover, Germany. The church struggle was at its height. The Niemöller trial was about to begin. The city of Hanover was eagerly discussing the effect of certain new regulations about the education of German children in the Nazi-controlled schools. Yet within the church as the congregation gathered for worship there was a marvelous feeling of strength and serenity. The service began, and went quietly its appointed way. Then came the time for the reading of the Gospel appointed for the day. It was from the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew; and to my ears accustomed enough to hear the words, and to hear them without any excitement, there came these words of Jesus, spoken, so it seemed, straight into the heart of the German Church struggle with Hitler in 1938: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea"! I cannot describe the living, vital, tense silence in which these words were heard that morning. Everyone, including the Nazi reporter who was assuredly present, knew that they had a very direct application to the situation in the Third Reich.

That story illustrates something which I think to be typical and characteristic of continental preaching and biblical exposition, even in contrast to British biblical preaching. The continental preacher always seems to find a relevance for his biblical text that escapes the normal British and American preacher. In part this is due to the different experiences that Christians on the continent have undergone, particularly in these last three decades; but in part it is also due to a more realistic dealing with the Bible and a greater willingness to yield it authority than is to be found elsewhere in the West. It may well be that America and Britain must learn to thank God for the sufferings of their Christian brethren on the continent of Europe, a thing that is of the same order of difficulty as learning to be thankful to God for the sufferings that Christ himself underwent for us. It certainly

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seems that suffering and difficulty and tribulation beget deeper insights into the heart of the message of the Bible; and if that is so, must not all Christians thank God for the experiences, whatever they be, which teach us more surely and deeply of the good news of Jesus Christ?

I do not think that any one of us who was in that church in Hanover that Sunday morning had any sort of doubt that the Bible had just "come alive" and spoken straight into the contemporary situation. I have sometimes asked myself since, whether what we all quite understandably accepted as right and revealing was, after all, sound and proper exegesis. I would still say yes, upon mature reflection. After all, the truths of the Bible do not date; it has always been true that any person who caused a young believer to sin would be better not doing that but drowning in the sea. What happened on that Sunday morning was that we not only heard the truth but saw it dramatically illustrated in terms of our contemporary life. And that seems to me to be the heart of the preacher's task—to bring the text and truth of the Scriptures home to his hearers by dramatic illustrations in their contemporary situation. The truths of the Bible do not date; the experience of men is in constant flux: the preacher is the man who remains firmly rooted to the truths of the Bible while keeping alertly sensitive to the constantly changing experiences of men, so that he is always able to illustrate and illumine the biblical text for his hearers by use of material familiar to them in their daily lives.

It is here that theology must take a hand. Theology is the servant, not the master of the preacher; as it is the servant, not the master of the gospel. Yet the preacher who must constantly renew his images and illustrations stands in continual need of the services of the theologian, so that he may be assured that his attempts to make the gospel relevant and alive in the present situation do not evacuate the gospel of its truth and power, but rather preserve both for the help of men. The theologian must therefore be like the preacher, a man sensitive to the movements of his time, and able to see the relevance of the gospel to them. This has been illustrated again and again in the course of Christian history; in the Middle Ages when St. Thomas formulated the gospel creatively in the terms of the new Aristotelianism that threatened to engulf it, and in the twentieth century when a Bultmann seeks to restate the central issues of the gospel so that twentieth-century man may be faced realistically with them, and not with peripheral issues that concern only the differences between the first-century cosmological myth and that of the twentieth. I shall try to show in the rest of this article how European theology and preaching may be understood as a

vital response to the pressures of the twentieth century, which are veritably an issue of life or death for the church.

Europe has known a good deal of political, racial and religious persecution during the twentieth century, and the story is by no means ended yet. Christians in Europe have thus been called upon to face once again the challenge of a history that seems, on the face of it, to have got out of divine control. This has led continental theologians and preachers to become greatly concerned with the twin problems of history and eschatology. It has become quite plain, I think, that no this-worldly theory of providential government can possibly answer all the questions that even secular, let alone Christian men are asking. History itself is irrational and unbearable unless it issue in an "end," an *eschaton*; and yet the end, the *eschaton*, is itself meaningless unless it be in some real sense the crown and consummation of the whole historical process. And these mysteries of our human existence find their greatest illumination in what the Scriptures have to say about the crucified Savior—who was "as a lamb slain before the foundation of the world," who "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried," and who remains, as a slain Lamb, the very center of the final community of God's people in the "end." The theological issues here are vast and profound—the nature of time and eternity, the doctrine of the Person of Christ, the meaning of resurrection and eternal life as distinct from survival and immortality. But the question, "Does it preach?" I answer with a clear "yes." Nothing else does.

Europe has known, and still knows a militant, articulate and highly self-conscious atheism. Many Christians see it as something much more understandable and excusable than Paul would seem to do in Romans 1. That can only be because they recognize unbelief as much more a part of their own natural mind and heart than their optimistic and untroubled nineteenth-century predecessors ever knew, or would have admitted. It is not surprising in such a situation to find that some preachers and theologians should forswear all "natural theology," denying any common ground between Christian faith and unbelief, or even other sorts of religious belief, and assert in new and august terms the absolute transcendence of God, his complete and utter otherness from all things human and terrestrial. Belief for such preachers and theologians is not the product of rational argument, but rather the miraculous gift and endowment of God. As Paul said, "None can say that Jesus is Lord, save by the Holy Spirit."

Christian belief is thus not to be evoked by argument at all. All that Christian men can do to generate belief is to bear testimony to their Lord

and Savior, Jesus Christ. The issue of their testimony must be left to God. And yet, while this way of thinking seems to be so narrowing down the field of divine activity to the fortunate ones who are brought to believe by the Spirit, such theologians and preachers are quick to point out that what God has done in Jesus Christ he has done not for Christians only, but for the world as a whole. "God so loved *the world* that he gave his only begotten Son"; "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." So, for these preachers and theologians, even the unbeliever is living in a new world, has received a new status, even though he neither knows nor admits it. In spite of all the unbeliever's rebellion against God, his blindness to what he has done, and his deafness to the testimony of his works, the loving purposes of God, which embrace even the most obstinate atheist, revealed and enacted in Jesus Christ, will come to their full consummation and end. Will they preach? What else will preach to an a-theistic world?

Europe has not only known much political and religious persecution and oppression; it has known the devastation and terror of two world wars fought out, in large part, on its territory. For many this has meant the loss of all hope. After the second world war, nihilism seized the hearts of many, even of the young; and it is by no means fully exorcized yet. Admittedly there have been attempts to erect some sort of skeleton of belief even for such hopeless victims of human tragedy. Existentialists have tried to persuade themselves and others that the only meaning the world can possess is the meaning each can create by his own decision, a meaning that has a brief life, and leaves a sea of meaninglessness that needs to be illumined again and again by significant decision if it is to have any coherence or bearableness at all.

It seems to me that two sorts of theological and homiletic language have been addressed to such men of despair. First there has been the school of those who have brought many to realize anew that God is not an "object" out there in space, but a person who is no more enclosed by a space than any person is; that he always addresses us as persons, and that part of the possibility of our becoming real persons, capable of entering into personal relationships even with other human persons, is to hear and respond to his address to us. So to an age where men have lost their sense of counting for anything at all because they are so continually reckoned as mere ciphers, mere things, there has come the proclamation that a personal God has addressed to each individual human person a personal word of love that endows him with a new and enduring significance. Second, the hopeless man of today

has been spoken to by those preachers and theologians who have tried to show that in the end all the church's strange dogmatic language really signifies some feature or features within our human existence.

But this experiential restatement of Christian doctrine was designed also to meet another problem which the church has had to face in twentieth-century Europe. Christians all over the world have known the tensions for human thought that the ancient religious language of the church has made for modern man. God is hymned as "Up in highest heaven," in an age that knows that there are no such absolute ups and downs in the universe. The whole biblical world of demons and angels, of miracles, powers of the air, signs and wonders, theophanies, visions, and the rest, is wholly unacceptable to modern man. So modern man has understandably rejected the religion that uses such demonstrably outmoded concepts.

But such concepts are not, for another class of preacher and theologian, the central ones for Christianity. Modern man must not be allowed to reject Christianity for such superficial and trivial reasons; let the faith be so stated that it is accepted or rejected for the right and central reason that a man either acknowledges Jesus Christ as Savior or rejects him as such. For the rest, let the church show that her ancient terms are now what indeed they always have been, mere symbols of realities which today we can refer to without the distortion (for us) of the embarrassing symbolic language of the past. Thus instead of saying that God is on high, that angels can come down from heaven to visit and aid us, let us say that our human existence is such that it is always open to divine influences for good. Instead of saying that demons can come from beneath to take possession of our bodies, let us say that our human existence is always open to demonic or evil influences. In such ways the first-century "myths" can be "de-mythologized" and modern man left to face the central claims of Jesus Christ to be the one savior of men.

European man knows something of the tragic menace surrounding human life. He lives in a continent that, should a third world war break out, would know at once the full power of the destructiveness of the nuclear weapons now being amassed on either side of the Iron Curtain. He knows, perhaps more than any other continental man, that "in the midst of life we are in death." The line between life and death is daily very thinly drawn. At any moment some thoughtlessness of a politician's tongue, some willful seizure of what might be thought a quick advantage, could bring the man of Europe from life to death. His mortal days would be done in an instant;

he would cease to be. But this is not the only eclipse of man that stares him in the face. He has known human nature to lose almost all that makes a mortal nature human. Indeed he cannot but see, in much of his environment, the brutalizing effects of much of modern European life. Perhaps his rulers really believe that there is no such thing as "human nature," but only a susceptible negativity that, in the hands of modern rulers with up-to-the-minute methods of brain control, can be fashioned into perfect subjectivity, so that the clever modern ruler can obviate even any possibility of rebellion.

Perhaps the European Christian looks out upon the world of his fellow men and sees the vice and lust, the greed and envy, the hatred and rebellion, the violence and murder so rampant that he wonders whether humanity is still entitled to the name "humane." In such a world those theologians who speak in terms of *being* have found a means of communicating with some. Man's being, as a man, is threatened by the twin powers of sin and death. In Jesus Christ, who was, and is yet, a God-man, sin and death have both been overcome. All other men fall daily to sin and death, and in the end death must destroy us all. But what Christ offers to those who are bound to him is a being that withstands even the assault of the destroyer death, and the last attempts of sin to keep us from attaining our full manhood in Christ.

Does it preach? It is a question that is often, and rightly, asked about a theology. As I try to understand the European scene today and to comprehend the message of Christian theologians I am convinced that the theologies that have been wrought out in the fierce lives of twentieth-century Europe are fashioned for such times as ours, and that they make a firm and sure basis for the Christian preacher. If some of us are privileged (or unfortunate?) to live in places where the fires that have consumed so much of Europe's traditional Christian past have not yet burst into flame, we can surely learn much from our continental brethren. At least their experiences and the theologies they have fashioned should save us from complacency with our lot, and from triviality in our own thinking and preaching. Perhaps God means that the sufferings of Europe are for our protection against the very evils that have so devastated her. May we not fail at least to ask the deep and disturbing question: Was Europe "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities"? was the "chastisement that made us whole" laid upon Europe? For if we ask and answer this question, it may become true of us that also by her "stripes we are healed."

7. Continental Theology and American Social Action

JOHN H. YODER

THE TITLE OF THIS ARTICLE reflects a widespread interpretation of current emphases of Christian thought and action in Western Protestantism. According to this understanding, the key to the difference between European and North American Protestantism is to be seen in the difference between a concern for theology on the one hand—represented by Europe—and an overwhelming interest in social action on the other, of which North America is the home.

There is at first sight much to back up such an analysis. Much European ethical thinking has worked with a concept of "vocation" which cut the nerve of any significant critique of existing social institutions and practices. The European professor's concern for systematic consistency and intellectual probity has often seemed to divert attention from things which needed urgently to be done in the social order. European Churchdom has often enough succumbed to the temptation of clericalism, seeking to participate in the management of contemporary society rather than bringing to bear upon social injustices the judgment and the restoring promise of God.

But this observation, valid as far as it goes, becomes an injustice and a lazy cliché as soon as the conclusion is drawn that American Christianity is essentially different at any of these points. In truth, the same weaknesses beset American Christians, in forms which differ only slightly. Where continental Lutheranism spoke of "vocation" and lost much of its capacity to resist fascism, Americans speak of "responsibility" and find room for nuclear warfare as a bitter necessity; only the words have changed. The fundamental structure of ethical thought is the same.

In truth some of the most penetrating Christian thinking about social concerns has come from the ranks of European Protestantism. The names of Oberlin, Blumhardt, Stöcker, Naumann, Tommy Fallot, and Mathilde Wrede belong in the Hall of Fame of Christian social concern as fully the

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peers of Woolman, Wilberforce and Jane Addams; only lack of information sustains the impression that Anglo-Saxons alone have fed the hungry and visited those that are sick and in prison. The main reason for the common impression that Europeans are interested only in speculative theology is probably that Americans going to Europe were centering their attention on theology, and bringing back what they looked for: not Blumhardt but Ritschl, not Siegmund-Schultze but Karl Barth. Today the Evangelical Academies, lay training institutes for Christians of all vocations—of which there are a score now active in Europe, running full programs of conferences around the calendar—are carrying on a program of education in Christian social concern which leaves American performance far behind. If there is anything at all left of the cliché which calls Americans activists and Europeans scholars, its truth consists in pointing to a general cultural difference due to the effect of the frontier on the American mentality and to other comparable sociological factors, without theological significance.

Nevertheless there is something to learn from recent Continental Theology. We cannot, however, find it by asking how Europeans as a whole are different from Americans as a whole, but rather by asking what specific Christian insights have been rediscovered and more deeply understood in some European theology (in contrast to other European theologies) which may teach us, not because they are European but because they are Christian.

(1) The first lesson which European theology has learned in the last half-century is that there is such a thing as Christian theology. For a century and a half, scholars and church folk alike had been operating on the assumption that theology, rather than being "speech about God," was a branch of the philosophy of religion, a discussion of the presuppositions of human religious experience, in fact a kind of applied anthropology or "speech about man." Theological statements were judged on the basis of whether they were reasonable, whether they "made sense" to the sensible thinker. Faith was replaced by "religion" and commitment by neutrality.

We have come to learn that any Christian theology worthy of the name must make the claim, whether it be right or wrong, to be talking about God. If God is God, and not simply a projection of men's good intentions and guilty conscience, if his existence is a reality before which man bows rather than a conclusion to be proved with more or less certainty, then theology as an intellectual discipline can no more answer only to the criteria of supposed rationality, can no longer build on educated guesses about how to interpret religious phenomena. If theology is worth the trouble at all, if there is a God who is truly God, then we must begin not with introspection

but with Revelation, not with discovery but with disclosure. This is the abiding lesson of the so-called "dialectical theology" of the 1920's in Europe.

And this is a lesson which American Christendom gravely needed, and still needs, to learn. Our tendency toward pragmatism and our shortage of scholarly perspective have permitted us to go farther than the Europeans in equating theology with applied anthropology. We, i.e., the dominant voices of American theology, no longer really expected Revelation to tell us anything; what we wanted from religion was the conviction and strength to do the right, and we felt no need to be informed about what the right was. Be it feminism, prohibition, patriotism, or open covenants openly arrived at, we felt we knew all we needed to know about right and wrong; what the church would add could be only motivation and consolation. What Europe learned through the First World War, we have just begun to sense since the Second, namely, that we are not at all sure of the basic values which we so long took for granted.

The category of revelation has again begun to come into its own, after one generation wasted its time condemning the question as obscurantist, rejecting as the fruit of speculation that European concern for theological foundations which was in reality the lesson of history. It has now begun to soak in that we are not ready for action until our goals have been fixed and their rightness tested. We do not know, we cannot take for granted, what it means for men to live together in love and justice. We cannot learn from sociology and economics and psychology alone what makes the good life. We must be *told*, and when we are told we are placed within the realm of Christian theology.

(2) This discovery that there can be no theology, and indeed no faith, without Revelation, is in itself purely critical and formal; it only reports the existence of a vacuum which needs to be filled. The positive counterpart of this critical discovery had to be a new clarity on where we are to go to find the words of eternal life. Is the revealed norm to be found in the Ten Commandments? Or in the entire text of the Bible? Or in the twofold love commandment in the New Testament, or in the Sermon on the Mount? Debate about just where this authoritative central certainty is to be found has been endless and fruitless. On this path, seeking first to fix upon some particular set of commandments and then seeking to interpret with perfect clarity just what they mean, no certainty can be found to put an end to the argument.

Thus it is that our thought has been driven back to the classic questions of Christian thought, which center in the person of Jesus Christ and

the Holy Spirit. Jesus the Man, in his total human existence—birth, ministry, ethical decisions, death, resurrection—and not alone the maxims he taught or the Bible he believed, is the Word of God to men, the revelation of the manhood God wants of us. The fundamental decision for Christian ethics is not whether this or that principle is valid, this or that hortatory text canonical and inspired, but whether we see in the Humanity of Christ the invasion of our world by Deity. This is the abiding lesson of the development of the *Theology of the Word of God* in the 1930's.

(3) As far as social ethics as a discipline is concerned, this affirmation of the centrality of Christ has been filled in with considerable content by recent studies in biblical theology. Far from being an apocalypticist who paid no attention to society because he expected the end of the world any minute, and far from being a hillbilly who paid no attention to society because his rural Galilean background and pastoral mentality gave him no understanding of social problems, we have been reminded by recent studies such as those of Oscar Cullmann that Jesus was a political figure of the first order from the beginning to the end of his ministry. He made ethical decisions, which the doctrine of the Incarnation would lead us to conclude were right decisions, and therefore normative for today, about the problem of the use of power in society. There is in his life less detail to be learned, perhaps, about the problems of old age, marriage, and work, but at any rate the problem which analysts of social ethics have come to consider the most basic, that of power in society, is one to which he speaks loud and clear. We may or may not like what he says on this issue—if it be true that Revelation is not simply the sum total of our best guesses, it may well be that we shall not like it—but speak he does, in a way which is clear and relevant to our day.

Not first of all his teaching, whether in the Sermon on the Mount or elsewhere, but rather his total ethical involvement, which the teaching only describes, is the place we go to find what it means to be human. The Sermon on the Mount is not another code of ethics to be compared with the codes of Confucius or Ben Franklin, Auguste Comte or Dale Carnegie, to see which one makes the most sense; it is a description of what it means to be members of the Body of Christ.

(4) Thus far we have been contemplating one theme: what it means for theology to be theology. The other major problem in Christian thought in our day is what it means for the church to be the church. In New Testament times it is clear that to be the church meant to stand in combat with "this world." The "world" as the adversary of faith was an historical

reality, over against which the church as the firstfruits of a renewed humanity could exist only through constant vigilance and tension. This primitive Christian understanding was dropped after the time of Constantine. The unity of medieval Christian society, which the Reformers made no attempt to modify, meant the abandon of the reality of the church in the New Testament sense. Ethics had to be aimed at the performance level of decent paganism, with the practicability of ethical commands and the survival of the existing social structure as the rules of thumb for measuring proper ethics. The State Church, wars waged with the blessing of the churches, pedobaptism and social conservatism fitted together in a pattern. Ethics aims to conserve and not to renew society; Christian ethics is for everybody.

Thanks to the Grace of God and Adolf Hitler, some European Christians learned something of the reality of the church as *over against* the world. In spite of the fact that their Lutheran and Reformed theological backgrounds gave them no justification for it, the men of the Confessing Church in Hitler Germany discovered the church anew, and relearned that the status of persecuted minority is normal, and not exceptional, for the faithful church. This lesson is still being learned, with brutal clarity in Eastern Europe and in confused struggle in the West. The "world" as the church's interlocutor, as the structuredness of evil, as the addressee of the Gospel, is once again coming into focus.

This truth is also one which Americans needed and still need to learn. Nowhere are the dangers of identifying a faith with a culture more serious than here in "God's own country," and it will take more than a few clever satires of suburbia to relearn the distinction. Thus far the desire to rehabilitate the biblical awareness of the distinction between church and world has been passed off as pessimistic, when in reality it offers us the only real grounds for a confident Christian hope.

(5) The positive counterpart of the renewed awareness of the "world" as a determining concept in social ethics is the affirmation that we do battle with the world as a church rather than as individuals. A social reality, no "spiritual" imaginary entity, the church is nonetheless not explainable in terms of social mechanisms. She is most effective in leavening society when she accepts most willingly her minority status and the suffering that status involves, finding her strength in her exemplary creativity and not in the ability to legislate morals for a rebellious society.

(6) The newfound dignity which belongs to the church when she finds her true place in God's plan has been the subject of much recent

theological work. The study of the Old Testament, which in recent years has gone beyond comparative religion to look for the testimony of faith in Israel's history, has found that the central theme of that history is not ethical, nor ethnic, nor cultic, but rather the creation of a community of faith in the midst of the flux of history. That God by his covenant with men creates a people out of every nation and tongue and tribe is the theme of the Old Testament and of the New. And what biblical theology tells us, recent history confirms. The lessons of the ecumenical movement in overcoming nationally limited church loyalties, the lessons of the missionary movement in replacing the church in a minority context, and the lessons of social analysis in documenting the collapse of the "Christendom" mentality, all concur to place before us a challenge to Christian reconstruction which surpasses in its clarity and its urgency the most fervent activism of the past. "Let the Church be the Church" is more than the slogan for a particular emphasis in interchurch relations; it is the crucial task for Christians in our age.

(7) To sum up: I have attempted simply to testify to my conviction that there is something to learn from the discipline of Christian theology. If the course of events has been such that some Europeans learned it first, that should be no reason for our closing our ears to the truth because at first sight it seems obscurantist or pessimistic. We need a resounding reminder that we must know what we want and why it is desirable before there is any point to discussing how to obtain it. Said in good old Christian terms, what we need is salvation, and that can be found only in Christ. What we need is Revelation, and that has been given once and for all.

Secondly, we need a reminder that the meaning of history resides not in political, military, or economic power structures, but in the work of the church as a new kind of community, gathered from the world for the world's sake. Even when we sing of how kings and empires come and go, it is hard to adjust our minds to a confession of true faith in Christ's kingship, with all this means for our evaluation of political events.

Despite the injustice of all such generalizations, the claim may well be hazarded that these two affirmations—the authority of Revelation and the dignity of the church—have characterized by their absence much American Protestant ethical thought and thereby accounted for its lack of effectiveness and of a specifically Christian tone. May we learn—not from our European brethren, but with them from the Lord of History—what the Spirit says to the Churches.

Levels of Interpretation in the Gospels

CHARLES W. F. SMITH

THE TEACHER of New Testament exegesis nowadays often feels as though he were fighting a rear-guard action. Many of his students appear resistant to the disciplines which are involved, and in the urge to arrive at something called "Biblical Theology" they are restless under the examination of the text. They can be heard to retail the remark, "The text throws a lot of light on the commentaries." The remark is whimsical and has a double value. Some exegetical commentaries become so involved in the minutiae of critical studies that the reason for studying the text at all has virtually been buried. Only by getting back to the Gospel and the interest of the story it tells can any reason be found for referring to the commentary. On the other hand, as a disparagement of any critical study whatsoever, the quip raises the questions, "Which text?" or "The text understood how?" In other words, whereas a few decades ago exegesis may have been taken for granted, now it has to be justified.

I

The reason for this may be expressed briefly as impatience with the procedure of critical studies and eagerness to arrive at a theological understanding or application of the Gospels. There have been two recent addresses given in seminaries which illustrate the disturbance abroad.

The first is the Page Lecture delivered in November, 1959, at the Berkeley Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut, by Archbishop Carrington of Quebec, author of the calendrical theory of the origin and structure of Mark's Gospel.¹ The lecture reviews from a personal standpoint the history of New Testament criticism. The Archbishop explains that he had approached the objective study of the New Testament with the hope that it would be truly scientific—that is, that "it might be possible to investigate the evidence first, and then make up one's mind, on the

¹ "Biblical Criticism Surveyed with Special Reference to the Gospels," in *Berkeley Divinity School Bulletin* 170, New Haven, Connecticut, Dec. 1959.

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basis of this investigation, what one thought about historical Christianity" (p. 4). Carrington then attacks, and of course justly, the thesis-antithesis-synthesis school of Tübingen and calls it a "learned perversion of history" (p. 5). In the course of this, one of his own slants is revealed in the words, "It pains me to say so, but there was also a tendency to rule out of consideration the more churchly or sacramental or apostolic elements in the evidence, since they tend to support a catholic estimate of Christian origins" (p. 5). The question I would raise is, granted there are items that support what the Archbishop calls a "catholic estimate," *at what level is it found?* One does not need to be an Hegelian to pursue this question.

The Archbishop's interests are clearly revealed when he alleges that the "first century date and historical character" of the Acts of the Apostles has been "amply vindicated," and of the Fourth Gospel, "the external historical evidence for its connection with the Apostle John is overwhelmingly strong" (p. 6). A heavy attack is then leveled against eschatological interpretation in general and Albert Schweitzer in particular. After being early impressed with the ability of scholars to distinguish strata in the biblical narrative, the Archbishop was later forced to the conclusion that texts were often rejected because they contradicted the investigator's theory. As illustration, he uses the critical approach to the parables (which of course caught my eye) to illustrate the arbitrary method of the critics, not mentioning the fact that Jewish models exist for comparison. He designates the results of Jülicher's study "tolerable sermon illustrations" (p. 10), ignoring the fact that Jeremias made the same judgment on Jülicher but retained and refined Jülicher's method.

There is no need to follow Carrington further at the moment except to suggest that one of his complaints may illustrate what I would call the "too eager"² school of interpretation. Carrington puts great weight on the "apostolic" Gospel. He complains that "the dominant protestant schools" tend "to ignore the twelve apostles or even to deny their existence." These are his words: "If we accept the apostolate as it appears in the evidence, it tells in favor of a catholic estimate of the gospel movement; and yet it is a fact that the formation of the apostolate by the Lord as his organized authoritative ministry in the gospel movement, is the theme which gives historical continuity, not only to the Markan record, but to the New Testament evidence as a whole, and the Christian literature which follows it" (p. 14).

² Since reading this paper I have found the expression "to err by a kind of over-eagerness" applied to Thornton, Farrer, and Vischer by E. C. Blackman in *Biblical Interpretation*, London, 1957, p. 162.

What happens here, it seems to me, is an eagerness to accept everything as of equal value and interpret it on the same level. What is the actual situation? In Mark Jesus appoints "The Twelve," and this is what Mark calls them. They have, I believe, an initial connection with an eschatologically motivated mission in relation to Israel (twelve tribes) in Jesus' own lifetime.³ Although they are "sent," only once does Mark call them "the sent ones," that is, "the apostles"—and in that instance it could easily be a case of assimilation to Luke. Or it may even be, as Rengstorff suggests, that the term "Apostles" is only a temporary appellation, since it drops out when the mission is over.⁴ Elsewhere we read only of "the disciples." It is Luke who adds to the story of the choice of the Twelve the phrase, "whom he named apostles." The fact that the lists of names are notoriously hard to harmonize should be taken to mean, not that we do not know how many there were in the Twelve but that at an early stage the twelve names were uncertain. Only the fact that there were Twelve was preserved. A case for this number is preserved in the election of Matthias, but disappears thereafter in favor of the apostolate of which St. Luke is so fond. Among the "Apostles" occur persons unknown to the days of Jesus and hardly any of the Twelve.

The burden of proof, then, that the Twelve of Mark's Gospel had any connection with an official body of Apostles commissioned by the Risen Christ (particularly since in the Fourth Gospel even this is not clear) must be on those who wish to find an authoritative body of Dominically designated officials. The Lukan and Matthean resurrection stories certainly endeavor to make this connection, but that evidence is not conclusive. I offer no solution at this point, but merely remark that there is evidence which certainly suggests other possibilities to be considered. The "fact" of which Carrington speaks does not seem to me to be an entirely clear fact but only one level of interpretation.

II

Much impatience with methodical examination of the Gospel evidence arises from an appreciation of the fact that all of the Gospels are theological documents. Just what is meant by this may vary a good deal, as will the way in which the theological element is found. We can have as widely different appraisals as those of F. C. Grant, R. H. Lightfoot and Austin Farrer. The latter is an example of what already seems to be a temporary

³ See my article, "Fishers of Men" in *Harvard Theological Review*, LII, No. 3, July 1959.

⁴ Rengstorff, K. H., "Apostleship" in *Bible Key Words*, trans. from Kittel, R., *Theologisches Wörterbuch des neuen Testaments*, Harper & Brothers, 1952. See pp. 37-39.

aberration—the uncontrolled discovery of “images,” of typological fulfillments and prefigurations which turned the Evangelist of the Markan Gospel into a juggler. The revival of allegorical and typological interpretation has been adequately dealt with by Lampe and Woolcombe in their “Essays on Typology.”⁵

There has been perhaps a revolt here against a feature of “form criticism,” namely the complete atomization of the Gospel material. There can be no doubt whatever that the examination of pericopae in isolation can teach us a great deal. The values of the study of units in what can be discovered of their *Sitz im Leben* has often been ignored by commentators who have given the method a bow in the introduction and then ignored it in the body of their work. As a matter of fact, however, these units no longer exist in isolation. The editorial links which unite them to adjacent pericopae are quite apparent, but it must also be considered whether the internal structure and meaning of the pericopae have not sometimes been modified by the context the Evangelist has given them. Indeed, continuing study of Mark seems to suggest that the juxtaposition of units has its purpose. This factor is, I think, apparent in the arrangement of some of the Markan material in a sort of chiasmic structure, e.g., in the stories of the opposition of Jesus’ friends which enclose the Beelzebub controversy, and as a factor in understanding Mark’s use of the so-called Cursing of the Fig Tree. In the complex of material at the latter point in the Gospel there are several levels at which interpretation has taken place: (a) discovery of a “Holy Week” chronology, (b) the Markan plan itself, (c) a period at which Jewish liturgical interests predominated and, possibly, (d) the actual historical event.⁶

It is interesting to see that emphasis upon the over-all function of the Gospel construction is being increasingly made. This is very different from what one can only call the mystification found by Farrer and much nearer the intelligent analysis of R. H. Lightfoot or even the editorial function that M. S. Enslin has always insisted needed more attention. I may illustrate this by quoting Robert M. Grant in his Presidential address at the 1959 meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis. Speaking of the recently published Gnostic Gospels he said:

Is it not the duty of the analyst to look first of all at books as a whole before proceeding to break them up into what he imagines their sources to be? Must he not, in other words, consider the purposes for which Thomas and Philip were written

⁵ Lampe, G. W. H., and Woolcombe, K. J., *Studies in Biblical Theology*, No. 22, 1957.

⁶ As demonstrated in my article, “No Time for Figs,” in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXIX, Part IV, Dec. 1960, pp. 315-327.

and treat these gospels as entreties before considering what the books were made up out of? This is to say that, in modern literary criticism, formal analysis should not supersede genetic analysis entirely; but we know that Matthew, for example, is not adequately appreciated when it is treated as Mark+Q+M. The purpose, the direction, the "thrust" of the book is basic.⁷

A contemporary danger arises, it seems to me, when the threat of atomistic skepticism is combated by the application to the Gospels out of hand of an over-all theological theory or even an all-elucidating liturgical origination. There are dangers because the theology which the Gospel is taken to be expounding may be biblical in the sense only that the text may be used, at least in part, and on the surface, to support the theology. It may not be biblical in the sense of being the interpretation the Evangelist intended by his construction. Even the Evangelist's interpretation, however presented (whether by arrangement, editorial comment, or modification of the text), may not be the interpretation most reasonably to be assigned to his sources, where these are discernible. It is even possible that we may be able on occasion to glimpse beyond this a level at which there is a still more primitive basis of interpretation possible. We are here reminded of Schmiedel's "nine foundation pillars"—the theory that we find passages that run so counter to what we know of the viewpoint of the early Church that we may well attribute them to Jesus himself.⁸ They would be rather like fossils embedded in the Gospel strata. His "pillars" are of doubtful value, because a better knowledge of the environment has modified our sense of the discrepancy and because it is artificial in the extreme to assume that only what denies the church's faith can be considered reliable and none of that which has found expression in the church's worship.

The concept of the *Kerygma* is, of course, an attempt to deal with this. The "kerygmatic criteria," however, in themselves represent but one level of interpretation and that perhaps not the most primitive. Before giving a few examples, there is one other point to make. It has been widely affirmed that history as plain unvarnished fact does not exist; that in the act of being recorded the fact is given at least the interpretation of being worth recording. I am disposed to accept this at least in this sense—that we do not need to speak of the actual biographical facts of Jesus' life or his *ipsissima verba*, but only of the earliest accessible levels of interpretation. These may be at points indistinguishable from the original facts, but the context in which they are preserved is at least an interpretation and there-

⁷ Grant, R. M., "Two Gnostic Gospels," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXIX, Part I, March 1960, p. 2.

⁸ Mk. 10:17f; Matt. 12:31f; Mk. 3:21; 13:32; 15:34 (Matt. 27:46); 8:12; 6:5f; 8:14-21; and Matt. 11:5 (Lk. 7:22). *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Vol. II, col. 1881.

fore a modification of the facts. That this level of interpretation is worth seeking must, it seems to me, be obvious if Christianity is based upon the crucifixion of Jesus as well as on the Incarnation or Resurrection. It seems to be highly likely that Christianity must disappear if nothing at all can be known about who it was who was crucified or why. I shall refer to this again at the close in connection with another published lecture.

I have mentioned the question of the apostolate as one which must be studied at several levels. A similar situation exists with reference to the Last Supper. It is curious that efforts to make that occasion a *Kiddush* or a *Chaburah* meeting persist, in view of three things—first of all the purely incidental references in the Synoptics which suggest a Passover supper without any explicit symbolical use being made of the fact; second, the study of Jeremias which it is only fair to say disposes of most of the objections to the Passover meal;⁹ and third, the high probability that a state of emergency existed which, as we are currently only too vividly aware, makes the observance of rules a minor consideration. There is operative a factor which strikes me as paramount in keeping the discussion alive. I may put it this way. Let us suppose that the Fourth Gospel did not exist and there was therefore no pressure to establish as authentic the Johannine chronology and along with it many of the sayings of Jesus in that Gospel. Would there, in that case, be any pressure to question the obvious implications of the Markan account? The difficulties are not nearly so obvious once the effort to justify John is removed, and such difficulties as remain are most probably consonant with the historic situation. The striking fact is that the consistency of the Johannine account has symbolical meaning, whereas the apparent confusion in Mark has no utilized theological explanation.

III

It seems to me that one aspect of indifference to the earliest or historical level of interpretation is that it deprives us of a helpful tool in distinguishing the levels that exist. I mean the criterion of probability which is supplied by the audience rather than by the original speaker or the current reader. I can best illustrate this by two examples.

The question about fasting arises in the complex of opposition stories at Mark 2:18-20. The interest of the early church in this question may on one theory be suggested by the addition to Mark of the words, "and the Pharisees," or, on another, by the omission of them by Matthew and Luke.

⁹ Jeremias, J., *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (Eng. trans.), Oxford University Press, 1955. I am aware that Mk. 14:12-16 is "secondary," but the case for a Passover meal does not rest on this passage alone, nor does classifying a passage as "secondary" justify leaving it completely out of account.

Verbal parallelism becomes significant in Jesus' pronouncement, "And Jesus said to them, can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?" The next verse, which is not duplicated in Matthew and Luke, "As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast," may reasonably be treated as a gloss or at least a redundancy which Matthew and Luke could easily have felt added nothing to the previous nor to the succeeding verse. Verse 20, "The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast (Mark: 'on that day'; Luke: 'in those days')," may easily be recognized as *post-eventum*. As a matter of fact it adds nothing to what was said in the original pronouncement except that it provides an answer to a question which in itself is so rhetorical as to need no answer.

There seems no problem until the interpreters and theologians go to work. At one level the term "bridegroom" is fastened on. In the later New Testament the Church is the Bride of Christ and it soon becomes standard to think of Christ as the Bridegroom (this of course then becomes a base for exerting pressure on the parable of the Ten Virgins!). The over-eager expositor then bethinks himself of Old Testament references to Yahweh as the Bridegroom of Israel¹⁰—and at this point a Farrer-like excursion becomes easy. It is concluded that there must be a self-designation here, then, by Jesus of himself as the Bridegroom! It seems only fair to say that verse 20 with its reference to the bridegroom "taken away," as an obvious reference to the crucifixion (or, for that matter, to the ascension, if we go beyond Mark), seems to lend color to this. Here, however, we are in sight of another level: one at which the early church underlines the point about fasting because "the bridegroom" (identified as Jesus but not designated Bridegroom with a capital) is gone. What follows—the loosely attached sayings about patches and wineskins—bears this out.

The questions in my mind are these. Is the first interpretation, the self-designation, wrong? Is the one which finds a justification of fasting right, but not the most primitive? The criterion that has not been applied is the probability of what the audience might be expected to understand. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that verse 19 records an actual saying. What is the probability that (a) the hearers would take the speaker to be referring to himself or (b) would further understand such reference to have for its explication the Old Testament precedents? It seems to me the answer must be, Nil! I am prepared to argue that Jesus' use of the

¹⁰ The actual phrase does not occur but the word "husband" is used, Isa. 54:5; Jer. 31:32; see the analogy in Isa. 62:5, and such passages as Isa. 50:1; Jer. 2:2, 32; 3:1ff; Ezek. 16:8; Hos. 2:16.

term "Son of Man" was an enigmatic use (rather than a veiled use), but it does not seem to me reasonable to suppose that Jesus would, even in a veiled way, refer to himself as the Bridegroom of Israel. I suspect "biblical theologians" of being capable of first applying the veils they afterwards remove. It seems much more reasonable on every ground to suppose that Jesus used such an analogy in its simplest sense, as a folk saying. At that level it merely observes that one does not fast when a wedding is in process. We do not have to identify the wedding-guests nor the bridegroom nor *chercher la femme*. If this may be thought to be too mundane we need only remind ourselves that, mundane as it seems, there is enough already to interpret. In its simplest, and probably earliest, form the saying states that something unusual is afoot, an occasion which calls for such rejoicing as makes fasting inappropriate. The answer to the question, What is afoot? (as in so many cases in Mark) has to be sought for elsewhere and not in isolation here.

This does not mean that the interpretation of the "gloss" in verse 20 (or "expansion" as I would rather call it) as a justification of fasting is invalid, only that it is not the most primitive level of interpretation. One might be more skeptical about the self-identification issue. Even this is valid interpretation of Jesus, only it must be recognized as existing at a still more remote level.

All of this is probably too obvious to mention, but the appearance of "Christological" theories and "biblical theologies" which do not penetrate below the uppermost level do exist and need to be appreciated as something less than primitive. It is here that impatience or over-eagerness, I should say, is unprofitable and deluding. The understanding of the development of interpretation from level to level elucidates the development of theology and makes us aware of its nature. The levels of interpretation might here be attributed in turn to the theologian, the Evangelist, and someone who preceded the Evangelist. The reference (*aparthē*, "taken away") in verse 20 is clearly the work of the Evangelist or the early Christian preacher; but the self-identification can be attributed, I am sure, only to the reader. That I am not dreaming is indicated by the new commentary on Mark by C. E. B. Cranfield.¹¹ He will not rule out the likelihood of allegory in verse 19 ("the bridegroom") and can say, "it is possible that his (Jesus') use of the figure reflects his consciousness of being the Son of God." But note that the commentator then has the clarity to add, "though no such significance would be suggested to his hearers."

¹¹ Cranfield, C. E. B., *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, Cambridge University Press, 1960, p. 110.

It is just this kind of recognition of a reality, which is then laid aside to make a theological point, that I feel our students should be made aware of by careful exegetical study if they are to preach and teach in the modern world.

One other example must suffice, one in which I venture to raise again the question whether, in view of the same criterion applied, criticism may not be too sweeping.

The parable of the Banquet is a well known crux of parable exegesis. The two forms in which it occurs (Matt. 22:1-10; Luke 14:16-24) suggest that neither form may be original. At least two stories are conflated in Matthew, but when the addition of the story of the improperly-dressed guest is removed and elements which are inappropriate are eliminated, a fairly simple story begins to emerge akin to that in Luke. The Lukan version is free from the royal emphasis of Matthew's version in which a king provides a marriage feast for his son, features which suggest allegorical possibilities. The Lukan story has, however, one feature which most scholars still regard as "secondary." I refer to the master of the house sending out his solitary servant twice to secure replacements for the absent guests. It is widely held that this is an allegory of the mission to the Jews (the city) followed by the mission to the Gentiles (the highways and hedges). This interpretation may well be described as fitting the situation of the early Church and consonant with Luke's emphasis on the Gentile mission. In that case the final statement, that the purpose of filling all the places is to exclude those who were first asked, would have to be interpreted of the rejection of the Jews, that is to say, I suppose, the rejection of those Jews who consider themselves hale and active as distinct from the outcasts of the people.

I do not question this exegesis as a real level of interpretation, but I do question whether it justifies designating the part of the story on which it is based (or the whole Lukan parable) as a construction of the church. If we ignore the allegorical application (which nothing else in the story requires) it is quite possible to take it as a simple dramatic device used to give emphatic point to the whole story. That is to say, the last verse makes the point that the house will be so filled that none of the originally invited guests will be able to get in if they change their minds. The device of a second trip farther afield when the first had not produced enough substitutes only underlines the determination of the host. No effort will be spared to fill every seat. That this is capable of interpretation on the allegorical level of the Gentile mission is clear, but that another level exists on which

it has an organic place in the story to make a specific point seems also clear. I question whether the one excursion of the many servants of the king in the Matthew parable can be used to determine the question because, unlike Luke, the Matthean story, in its present form, involves a variety of other considerations, all of them characteristic of Matthew and incapable of separation from the shape in which it appears.

IV

Perhaps this is sufficient to suggest that sometimes when the interpreter professes to have met Jesus in the Gospel he may have met only the evangelist, or the editor of the Gospel, or even his own reflection. The theological interpretation of the Gospel material is a valid enterprise but it does not always deserve the adjective "biblical." Biblical theology would seem to require, rather, an appreciation of another level, that at which the evangelist by his use of the material at his disposal operates. Sometimes the two may overlap, but my suspicion is that they do not as often as is assumed. Beyond that we may often discern another level, a level which requires that it be read initially in the light of the first-century world, its religious and social interests and its demonstrable cultural and practical milieu.

In this connection two things may be said. The first is simply that the work of exploring the environment of the first century must not, at this juncture, be neglected. C. K. Barrett in his useful collection, *The New Testament Background*, gives examples enough of current interests, Jewish, sectarian and Hellenistic, to make the student or preacher who ignores the literary atmosphere of the times without excuse. The Qumran material, though still only partly published, is a case in point.

The other is the question of the possibility of recovering, by a "new quest," the historical Jesus. Hesitation about this, especially in the form of a kerygmatic undertaking as proposed by J. M. Robinson's application of the work of the "post-Bultmann" school, may well be justified.¹² But the value of penetrating beyond the most obvious level of interpretation and the conviction that behind the record there is a recognizable Person, justifies the careful study of the Gospels in their available form. It would seem to me that the Synoptics reveal something more like the memory of a Person, some real traces of the Person himself.

¹² Robinson, J. M., "A New Quest of the Historical Jesus," *Studies in Biblical Theology*, No. 25. We are indebted to Dr. John Knox for the elucidation that the first fact about Jesus for the early church was "he was remembered" (*Christ the Lord*, p. 6). It is my impression that the study of the Synoptics discloses beneath the level of interpreted memory some glimpses of a recollection which can be distinguished from the form in which the memory is embodied.

In this connection the inaugural address of Dr. W. D. Davies at Union Seminary in October, 1959, is a better example of the reassessment of New Testament criticism than the Carrington lecture. It is tempting to quote it *in extenso* for its caution about kerygmatic and theological exploitation of the Gospels. Dr. Davies speaks of Riesenfeld's attempt to simplify the problems of oral transmission by asserting a fixed and inerrant practice of transmission.¹³ He observes, "if such were so rigidly the case, the divergencies, which the same materials in the various strata of the tradition present, become inexplicable" (p. 92). He may be too optimistic about the possibility of a "resumption of the old quest (for the historical Jesus) on a new level," but the following statements are welcome affirmations. "The tradition about Jesus has its source in His activity; it is not the creation of the community, however much colored by its needs" (p. 92). "It would seem to me essential that there should be no incongruity between the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith. . . . Should they be incongruous, while a Theology of the Word might be possible, a Theology of the Word made flesh would hardly be so, and it is to such a Theology that the New Testament commits us" (p. 98).¹⁴

In conclusion, it seems to me essential that teachers of exegesis should persevere with their task and shun the lure of becoming simply teachers of "biblical theology." They should try to hold their students to the discovery for themselves of the varying levels of interpretation to which the Gospels at all events are subject. The problem becomes acute when the students become preachers and even when, as G. V. Jones has suggested, they undertake to read the Bible publicly in church.¹⁵ A preaching on only one level of interpretation, without admission that there are other levels, will not ultimately help the cause of Christ in the modern world. Nor, as Jones suggests, will the fostering of what he calls an "as if theology." By this he means the reading of certain biblical passages "as if" they were to our minds what they are likely to seem to the people's ears to be—that is, for example, to read the Fourth Gospel discourses as if we thought them as original as some of the Synoptic discourses.

The careful discrimination of the various levels of interpretation by

¹³ Riesenfeld, H., "The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings," in *Texte und Untersuchungen LXXIII: Studia Evangelica*, pp. 43-65.

¹⁴ Davies, W. D., "A Quest to be Resumed in New Testament Studies," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, XV, No. 2, Jan. 1960. It is not possible to provide a chart of the various levels of interpretation which would at every point distinguish the theological, kerygmatic, evangelistic and historical, since at some levels they coincide and in some places do not appear; hence it is not always possible to be satisfied with the terms as simple designations.

¹⁵ Jones, G. V., "Biblical Criticism and Theological Integrity," *Expository Times*, LXXI, No. 4, Jan. 1960, pp. 112-115.

the preacher will not, to my mind nor in my experience, do anything but strengthen his ministry. It will involve more work before a sermon is ever committed to paper or memory, but a real barrier between modern man and the Gospel will have been lowered. In place of what Jones calls "a mass of uncommunicated reservations" we might create what the listener in church expects, "a common basis of understanding." I find helpful his suggestion that what he calls the "different levels of biblical discourse" offer themselves as different means of approach to different levels of intelligence and Christian experience. But that is really a homiletical matter and beyond my present scope.

Sin and Psychotherapy

HANS-JOACHIM THILO

THE CONVERSATION between theology and psychotherapy in Europe has passed through three stages. In the first stage, beginning about 1930, the two camps were simply listening to each other. Psychoanalysis of the Freudian type and the beginning of dialectical theology could do nothing more than mutual listening and taking each other into account.

In the second stage, the encounter between theology and C. G. Jung, people on both sides believed that now a consensus would be found, that the "enemy brothers," psychotherapy and cure of souls, could be united. Already before the war, but especially in the years immediately after, we in Europe learned with astonishment and joy of how ministers and psychiatrists in the United States had begun to walk together. Today we are still far behind, but are approaching that degree of co-operation which in America is now almost taken for granted. We are beginning, slowly, to let our theological students work in neurological clinics during vacations; the directors of seminars for preachers have begun to require readings in psychotherapy, and occasionally they give courses for ministers in which the older generation too learns to relate psychological principles to the cure of souls.

These innovations have been carried farthest in Holland and Denmark. In Germany and Switzerland, despite many good starts, there is still much to do. In England the influence of psychotherapy in theological education has been strongest at Oxford. There Dr. R. S. Lee has broken new trails, together with Leslie Weatherhead. In Switzerland Dr. Th. Bovet and Dr. P. Tournier must be mentioned; in Germany the pastors and doctors have formed a group called *Arzt und Seelsorger*, which is active in almost all the larger cities of West Germany. Among these we should mention Drs. E. Bitter, J. Scharfenberg, Frau Dr. M. Sommer, H. Barnikoel,

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G. N. Groeger, etc. Nevertheless, on the whole there is still skepticism about large-scale co-operation between ministers and psychotherapists.

Why is it that what outsiders would call a normal co-operation between the two is not yet achieved in Europe, to the degree required for the welfare of the "patients" of both? This skepticism persists with us, especially in Central Europe, because since the Middle Ages there has been a deep cleavage between the natural sciences and the cultural and spiritual fields. In the last century this cleft was widened further through the rise of materialistic philosophy in Europe, as natural scientists believed that soon they would find nothing unexplainable and with further technical progress they could demonstrate that nothing is unknowable.

Theology on its side tried first, through liberalism, textual criticism, and efforts to bring the biblical text into line with scientific knowledge, to take the sciences into account. It is understandable that in an era when man expected within a foreseeable time to know all the secrets of creation through technology and scientific discovery, there was no room left for the reality of God or the teaching of life after death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The further development of such thinking we find today in communism, but almost to the same extent in the thought of the Western countries where the opinion is still cherished that the evolution of man shows clear progress in all fields and it can only be a question of time till man creates paradise on earth. It is a most disturbing sign of our time that this naïve faith in progress is found not only behind the iron curtain but dominates in quite another way the thought of Western man. This is the background of the present tension between theology and psychotherapy here in Europe. This is why, after the first stage of mutual acquaintance, and the second stage of apparent meeting, we have today a third stage of mutual skepticism.

I

The principal problem in this tension is the problem of Sin. One group of psychotherapists discards the concept entirely and sees in it their main reason for suspicion of the church's pastoral care. They ask, are the moral failures of man something that man can be held responsible for? Are there not, rather, external circumstances, childhood experiences, faults in upbringing and inheritance, which lead one to antisocial conduct? Are there generally binding moral laws, or does each period create its own morality? Isn't our so-called conscience only a complex based on false judgments, from which we must free mankind? Against this the theo-

logians set the word of Holy Scripture, according to which immutable moral laws are given (as in the Ten Commandments) which are valid independently of time and place. Is it not true, most churchmen will say, that in Scripture we are told clearly what is good and what is bad? Is liberation not always bound up with forgiveness of sin, which can only happen from God toward us? and is not the living out of our instincts basically animalistic, contradicting the fact that we are created in God's image? It is when psychotherapy speaks of the releasing of repressions and the theologian must speak of sin, that opinions clash.

We therefore need to clarify what we mean by "sin." In Genesis 3 the original sin of man is described, the "story of the fall." Let us first be clear on what it does not mean. Adam and Eve are not thrown out of paradise because they have mutually recognized their nakedness; the break between God and this human pair begins at the moment when first the woman and then the man succumb to the whisper of the serpent: "Did God really say . . .?" The promise the serpent gives as reward for disobedience is: You shall be as God, knowing what is good and evil. Sin in the Bible is *not a moral act, but decision against God*. To be disobedient to God, to will to know for oneself what is good and evil, to set oneself in God's place—that is the essential sin. Sin arises from the breaking of relationship between God and man. Adam and Eve are not primarily historical personalities; what Adam and Eve do, is done by every man and every woman. Every one of us, especially we moderns, succumb to the suggestion: Did God really say . . .? Every one of us would like to set his own standard and decide for himself what is good and useful for him, for his country, or for his denomination. From the broken relationship between God and man arises necessarily the sense of guilt. Guilt determines the relation of man to man. It is thus a result of sin, but not at all its equivalent. A considerable part of Freud's misunderstanding of religion rests on the fact that he never thought through and worked out this distinction.

We are glad to have the psychotherapists raise the question of where the boundary between guilt and sickness lies. In pastoral counseling we have to observe, much more than hitherto, that much that we call guilt is not under control of the will, but actually comes up from the unconscious depths of the psyche. To help us at this point is the Samaritan service of true psychotherapy. But we cannot forget that behind all human decision there stands a broken relationship between God and man. "Man's heart is evil from his youth." No psychotherapy can change this state of affairs, only the cross on Golgotha.

Let us now turn to practical application. How are consciousness of guilt and pastoral care related? Is there a responsibility in the neurotic person? Is it a help to him if we take away from him his responsibility for his guilt, if we simply deny it? The psychotherapist and the pastor have the same task—to help the man. It is the therapist's task to enable his patient to cope with life, to achieve success in his work, to make his marriage happy, and bring up his children rightly. All this can also be the task of pastoral care; the pastor has the duty to help the man serve the glory of God in *this* world (note: to serve "the glory of God"). Thus we cannot deny that also the sick man, the neurotic and the inhibited man, lives before God a worthwhile life in the full sense of the word. It is not sexual potency or impotence that decides the value of a person, but what he has done in obedience to God with his life for his neighbor. But here we theologians must be very careful. It is Pharisaism to belittle the achievements of psychotherapy by discounting the restoration of a man's psychological health as subordinate or unimportant. If a difficult father of a family through psychotherapy finds his way back to himself and to a fulfilled marriage and family life, this is not only an extraordinary human achievement but also comes under the word of Jesus, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). Even so, this is not a question of forgiveness of sin but of release from guilt.

In psychoanalysis there was a period in which "sin," "guilt," and "anxiety" were regarded exclusively as symptoms of illness, so that the aim of all therapy was to free men from these "inhibitions." Since then, in America as in Europe, many therapists have arrived at the view that these concepts do not simply represent pathological symptoms but are inherent in the reality of our life. It is an integral part of life to feel anxiety. Christ says (John 12:33), "In the world ye shall have tribulation"—a simple statement of fact. But this does not mean that the great concept of anxiety and its overcoming through pastoral care and through psychotherapy can be discarded; that would be failure to understand the following sentence: "But be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." Both pastoral care and psychotherapy must make men capable of receiving this good news and realizing it in life. Similarly the feeling of shame is not just a symptom of illness from which man must be freed, but belongs to human existence since the fall (Gen. 3:7-8). Here too it must be said that prudery should be treated by the psychotherapist when it makes a man incapable of the God-willed partnership between the sexes. Noted Christian psychotherapists

in Europe who have recognized this are von Gebattel in his *Christentum und Humanismus*, Tournier, *Technik und Glaube*, and on the Catholic side Michel, *Rettung und Erneuerung des persönlichen Lebens*. These three and others stress the conviction that guilt and sin are the cause of neuroses. Certainly the neurotic cannot be expected simply to help himself. He needs a mediator who offers him abundant help yet is inexorable, who leads him with love and patience to the point where he is able and ready to take over the responsibility for his wrong decisions.

But what does "responsibility" mean in the neurotic? Are not the concepts "sick" and "responsible" mutually exclusive? Professor Dubois in Paris especially has worked on this problem.¹ The whole problem becomes especially acute when moral lapses are concerned which are punishable under European law, although we have long known that the perpetrator is not really committing a crime but following his neurotic drives. This question arises especially with homosexuality and sexual attacks on the young. But can a well-ordered State leave sexual attacks on children unpunished, because the perpetrator must be called "sick" and therefore not fully responsible? Also the swindler and the murderer are usually, in the psychiatric or at least the psychotherapeutic sense, "sick." But clearly we cannot simply dispense with legal penalties. Penal reforms in France, Germany, and Switzerland have attempted solutions. In England for years a Commission of the Anglican Church has worked on these problems, and in co-operation with ministers and doctors formulated a statement which by this time has been practically applied in civil courts. From the standpoint of Christian faith, however, the question of responsibility can be answered only dialectically. Professor Tournier sets a total irresponsibility in the sense of human law and judgments, over against a total personal responsibility before God. Sick or healthy, sin toward God remains.

II

Release and healing of the neurotic is not possible simply through denying him all responsibility. To show this, I shall present two examples from my book, *Der Ungespaltene Mensch*.²

1. X, forty-two years old, an engineer, a large powerful type, without church connections, at any rate without conscious relation to a particular church. Childhood uneventful, harmonious relations with both parents, no clinical report. The patient suffered from a phobia of snow. If he

¹ Dubois, Ch., *Les Psychonévroses et leur traitement morale*, Paris: Masson, 1905.

² Thilo, H.-J., *Der Ungespaltene Mensch*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958. Dutch edition by G. F. Callenbach, 1960.

came in contact with snow in any form, eczema-like changes appeared in the skin. In his dreams snowy landscapes played a large role. When possible, he arranged to spend the winter months in southern localities. Anxiety over expected snowstorms led to angina and nervous heart attacks. Dermatological treatment of the skin had no effect.

In exploratory interviews the following facts emerged: X had had an intimate relationship with a young girl, under which both suffered. Yet both were neither ready to give each other up nor to give up sexual intercourse. They agreed to try outdoor sport together, in order to master themselves, without having to renounce personal contacts. One winter they went to a ski resort in the mountains. They happened upon a steep slope, where the girl asked him to let her take off her skis and run down. The man insisted that she take the jump along with him. The girl fell heavily, and her ski pole pierced through the roof of her mouth, resulting in a long, painful illness and death.

In psychotherapeutic treatment the patient was made conscious that there were connections between the girl's death and his "sickness"; but he was told that he was fully innocent of the death of his friend, that this was simply an incident that could not be helped. Through treatment the skin eczema disappeared, the patient recovered from his depressions and began to seek new contacts. However, at the first casual meeting with a young girl, the eczema formation, heart trouble and breathlessness quickly returned. And now the psychotherapist made a referral to the pastor.

To the patient's question whether he was guilty of the girl's death, the pastor replied "Yes." But he showed the patient that his guilt did not consist in the sexual relationship but in his lovelessness on the occasion of the girl's natural plea not to attempt the jump. The pastor cited Gen. 4:9, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Thereupon the patient asked to make his confession. The request was not made because the patient wanted healing for his bodily trouble, but because he sought forgiveness, which the psychotherapist was not able to give. After the confession the psychiatrist found an entirely different inner situation, so that further psychotherapy had to go deeper than a simple release from physical and psychological inhibitions.

2. A young mechanic, Y, twenty-three years old, had been under investigation for the attempted killing of his father. The father was an asocial man who made his whole family suffer. Every day there were heated arguments. One evening the young man found the father maltreating his mother. The youth knocked his father unconscious with a leaden pipe.

After four weeks the father was brought to a clinic with paralytic symptoms and died shortly after. Y was arrested, since it was supposed that his blow had been the cause of his father's paralysis and later death. The autopsy showed, however, that the father's death could not be connected with this blow. Y was therefore acquitted.

Ten weeks after his release from prison, Y began to have severe depressions. As there was no record indicating psychosis, psychotherapy was undertaken. At first through abreaction (transference to the therapist) of the hidden hate-complex a general improvement was successfully achieved. When the patient in analytic interviews repeatedly spoke of the fifth and sixth commandments, the therapist called in a pastor to help. The patient, after strong self-accusation, asked the pastor whether he was guilty; the pastor definitely agreed that he was.

This led to a break between the pastor and the therapist; the therapist gave the patient his choice of consulting either him *or* the pastor. Y thereupon proceeded to visit them both. After some weeks the pastor visited Y in return, and Y asked if he still persisted in the view that Y was burdened with guilt. Again the answer was Yes; it was made clear that, while the attack was humanly most understandable, the guilt was still there. This man too finally came to personal confession, and then psychotherapy was resumed. In the interviews the patient repeated again and again a German hymn beginning with the line, "Mercy has befallen me." Here too the renewed therapeutic process had good success.

These two cases should not be taken as showing a fixed scheme of procedure. I am sure that in both cases things might have turned out differently. They are meant simply to show that the love of God can use both psychotherapy and pastoral care to help a human being.

III

But what is the specific service of the therapist to pastoral care? We could not raise this question before, because first we had to be clear that psychotherapy from the start is concerned with something fundamentally different than is pastoral care. The latter has been defined as follows: the passing on of God's act of love in Christ to the *whole* man. Therefore the work of the pastor is legitimate only when, from forgiveness of sins to personal and social helpfulness, it bears the stamp of the life and the word of Jesus Christ. We cannot say this of psychotherapy, because certainly not only the Christian therapists are good therapists. While we do not relinquish the conviction that for certain spiritual conflict-situations a Chris-

tian point of view in the therapist is of immeasurable value, yet precisely as Christians we may not state that only the therapist with Christian faith can achieve genuine cures of severe neuroses. We must keep in mind that the therapist is primarily concerned with the restoration of a man's capacity for contacts with which he can cope with life. The minister too must, in the great majority of his counseling "cases," have this aim in view. What will be decisive for him is the fact that his "child in Christ" is entering into a right relationship with God. But it is also a fact that precisely through this new relationship, very often the general capacity for contact, the will to cope with life, and new joy in life do emerge.

Furthermore it must be of concern to both that they should not merely cure symptoms. The therapist cannot be satisfied that a patient's asthma attacks disappear, if a little later perhaps his sleep will be disturbed. It cannot be his goal to remove inhibitions in such a way that his patient after treatment will lead a life in which no limits are set to sex relations. Similarly the pastor cannot be satisfied if his parishioner has accepted a few statements of faith and recognizes them as right, but is not ready to draw any conclusions from them for his practical life. In general, sad to say, therapists today have a far better and broader view of their proper task than a great many ministers have. Nothing is accomplished in our pastoral counseling if our parishioner regularly takes part in all church affairs, actively co-operates in all the "socials," but at home is still a tyrant to his wife and children and in his professional life is the same joyless and withdrawn person as before.

The shepherd of souls repeatedly finds that the good news he has to proclaim, in which he himself finds fulfillment and joy, is accepted by his parishioner but does not become an inner possession. Depressions continue, anxiety states become stronger, and incapacity for prayer does not disappear because he prays with his parishioner and gives him careful directions for his own prayer life. We now realize clearly that it is not always within our power to bring the man entrusted to us, by technical aids, to an inner communion with God. We know that it is only the power of the Holy Spirit that calls men into the congregation of God, changes them and makes them new creatures. But this knowledge does not give us the right either to fold our hands in our lap or uncompassionately to demand a religious life from a man who in his present state is not capable of it. We have not the right to take the works of the Holy Spirit into our own hands; but we have the duty, through preaching, pastoral care, *and* psychotherapy, to prepare the field so that it can receive the seed of God and let it ripen.

In this task the pastor and the therapist meet. The number of neurotics in the consultation rooms of the minister is far greater than ministers in general are aware. A considerable part of the obvious failures in our pastoral care is due to the fact that we have said or done things which would have helped a psychologically healthy man, but had exactly the opposite effect on a neurotic.

Again let us take a practical case. A young woman comes to us with the complaint that she cannot cope with the loneliness of her life and suffers because she has to make all her own decisions for daily life. She has been able neither to find a proper husband nor to form the friendships she needs to make her loneliness at least bearable. In our counseling perhaps we refer to prayer and end with the word of Jesus in John 16:32: "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." We do this perhaps because we have found that the knowledge of the fatherhood of God is a help to us personally. But the pastor who simply hands on the knowledge to this parishioner finds exactly the opposite effect: the young woman stops attending church, loses her last connections with other people, and falls into dangerous isolation.

But the psychotherapist could tell the minister that it was evidently his well-meant reference to the Father in heaven which forced the woman into still greater loneliness. Why? This woman is in a neurotic depression which arose from the fact that her relation to her physical father was especially difficult. The father was a very strict, hard man, whom the daughter repeatedly wanted to approach, but never found in him the slightest understanding. In the course of years this state of affairs has slipped into the unconscious. The anxiety has remained, and the incapacity to entrust herself to other persons; both are facts which originated in the broken relationship to the father. Now when the pastor, at a moment when this woman is psychologically "open," innocently with a Bible quotation calls back to consciousness the memory of the precise cause of her difficulties, he is not helpful but destructive. So long as the pastor lacks even the simplest basic knowledge of human reactions, such difficulties will continually arise. It is clear, too, from this example that the pastor needs to know psychological laws, not in order to become a poor (half-educated) therapist, but to be able in his counseling to proclaim with full power the joyful news of the grace of God.

The same truth holds for the wide field of sexual perversions, especially in work with the young. Here it is only too easy to brand as sin something which is a necessary phase in the course of one's youthful de-

velopment. When a young girl of fifteen is so overwhelmed by her first encounter with a young man that she knows no other way than to give herself in her first joyful sexual awakening to this man, pastoral help does not consist in simply declaring the deed sinful and demanding an immediate breaking off of all relations with him. Of course an extramarital relationship, even under such circumstances and at this early age, is sin and offends against the ordinance of God. But the pastor must say all this *only* if he *at the same time* says something to the girl about the beauty of her dawning womanhood, and realizes that such a sudden flare-up of feeling is often connected with a lack of parental love and security at home. He should not first become indignant over the moral state of this girl, but must try in very careful and loving ways to change her home environment.

There will be various cases in which the parishioner's incapacity for life has gone so far that the minister cannot immediately start work with him, and indeed must not. Wherever the minister encounters delusions of persecution, suicidal intentions or attempts, hearing of voices or seeing of visions, he must in every case try to put the parishioner in the hands of a psychiatrist or psychotherapist. Of course, a relationship should already exist between the doctor and the minister, and should not be started only in connection with this case. It is needful that an enduring mutual confidence should exist between doctor and minister, that they form a team.

IV

Perhaps it is well to consider this whole group of questions also in connection with the field of child psychology. Things are not quite the same here as with adults. As the child has not yet had extensive experiences with ethical values, his ideas of good and evil are often completely different from the concepts of his environment. We must emphasize that a child is not simply a small adult, but a very individual person with his own laws of development and own outlook on life. We meet in the New Testament repeatedly Jesus' reference to the child. The child's thought and his faith are set up as an example to the adult. Why? Would Jesus make the child an ideal figure, as has been done, dangerously, in some periods in child psychology? Is it meant that a child can think and do nothing bad? Of course not. The Lord does not mean to idealize the child contrary to fact; he means that the basic attitude of the child to the adult is precisely the attitude the adult should have toward God. The whole thinking and reacting of the child is summed up in a single concept: trust. A child who goes hand in hand with his father in the dark through an

unknown street will never ask, "Is this way right? will we arrive where we want to go?" He will simply and naturally trust that his father knows the right way. The child does not know doubt and mistrust. That is precisely the situation in which Christ would have man be in relation to God the Father.

Under punishment, too, the child whose relation to his father is unbroken never loses the feeling that he is still loved. On the contrary the child in his inner depths feels a just punishment as a proof of love. Punishment in itself is not harmful to a child—on the contrary; but the deprivation of love is. Nothing is a harder blow to a child than his father not speaking to him any more; a form of punishment we should under all circumstances avoid. When Jesus requires that we become "like children," he does not mean a primitive attitude toward life, but simply this boundless trust toward "the Father" which nothing can shake.

Now we know that this state does not remain unbroken throughout the development of the child. We know, too, that through faulty upbringing this original trustful relationship can be not only disturbed but fully destroyed. But in such a case there always remains a great backward-looking yearning for a real fatherly relationship, which is expressed in the choice of a marriage partner or even in sexual perversions. Our task in counseling must therefore be to show our patients what inner peace, what security and what strength come from a truly childlike (not childish) relationship of trust in God. That is what pastoral care must learn from child psychology for the guidance of adults.

But now we are especially interested in the question to what extent the child knows something of sin and guilt. First it must be said that the child has no feeling or knowledge of sin. While his relation to the environment is essentially still unbroken, he can know nothing of a broken relationship with God. The child does not feel himself to be far from God, as we often painfully feel. He still knows nothing of the destroyed bridge between God and man, which man from his side cannot rebuild. He has not yet grasped the deep tragedy in the fact that we cannot undo anything, anything at all. He does not yet know the word of Paul: "For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. 7:19); at most he has a vague presentiment of it. Therefore the child has no consciousness of sin. But—he has a distinct and strong consciousness of *guilt*. We must recall what we have said about the difference between sin and guilt. Guilt arises in relations of man to man. The child knows this. He knows when he incurs guilt toward his parents. But here

precisely lies the difficulty for parents and educators. In the majority of cases where from our point of view the child is "guilty," the child recognizes no guilt in his action.

For example: five-year-old Billy has acquired a little sister. The parents are full of joy, and expect Billy to rejoice with them. But he does not; the parents observe that he wants to hurt his sister secretly, that he slaps and annoys her. Now it may be that the parents reproach Billy or even punish him, or tell him that God will take the little sister away again. Nothing could be worse! For Billy wants just that—that the little sister should disappear. He cannot understand why God should have given this sister. Hitherto he has understood that God gives and does only good things; but now, in Billy's view, God has done something very bad—he has sent this little being into Billy's house to deprive him of his mother's love. And he is scolded or even punished besides. If now the child is told that he must love his sister, otherwise God will be angry at him, the first crisis of faith is started in the child's heart. We must rather, from the first day, share with him the care of the new human being, must give him little tasks which he will enjoy doing.

It is different when the child has a healthy and clear feeling of guilt. When Billy stands in the street and throws stones at passing cars, we must first explain to him what dangers this involves. From the age of five he can understand this quickly. But probably he will do it again. Then he must be punished. Not because we have no other way to stop him, but because his healthy desire for punishment calls for it in order to restore his equilibrium.⁸ Simply because a child, much more than an adult, feels everything through his mind *and* his body, I personally believe that we should not give up the much-discussed practice of "spanking." Whenever physical harm may result from the guilty behavior toward others or toward himself, the form of punishment should involve physical pain. For instance, when we have forbidden six-year-old Mary to play by an open window on the fifth floor, and she does it again, then she needs to be spanked. (A child should never be struck in the face, only on the bottom.) Why? Because by a fall she would receive severe physical injuries. And it is not possible in this case to let the child learn by experience. Only the satisfaction of the sense of guilt by a punishment experienced mentally *and* physically is meaningful, because the fall from the window would have mental and physical consequences. Thus we cannot talk any longer about

⁸ There is, to be sure, also a dangerous, pathological desire for punishment, which does not concern us here.

bringing up a child without punishment. Since it balances the account after what the child really feels to be a guilty action, punishment is also healing. We punish not in order to intimidate, but really—to heal.

V

Sin and psychotherapy—how are they related? There is no human life which does not stand under the law of sin. This sin brings forth guilt. We *must* become guilty. There is no possibility on this earth of living without guilt. If this were not so, then the cross on Golgotha loses its meaning. But we have to distinguish between sin and guilt. We must know that the moral behavior of man does not necessarily have anything to do with his sin. We must learn, as Christians, that much which we call "sin" is not sin nor even guilt, but either sickness or faulty behavior, which cannot be remedied by pastoral counseling alone but only by psychotherapeutic treatment. But also we have to hold fast to the fact that sin and guilt are not just something which ought not to be. Sin and guilt simply belong to being human. Finally, we must not forget what help is given us by prayer.

Prayer is the deepest expression of communion with God. Our relationship with God can only be achieved through prayer. God wills that we pray. Prayer is not a matter of psychology, but a command and at the same time a gift from God to us. Prayer overcomes loneliness. But regularity is required for prayer. No one should be fearful that prayer is not helping him any more because at the moment he has many doubts. No one should suppose he can neglect prayer for awhile in order to take it up later on. Prayer has to be practiced. It is like a foreign language; if one fails to use it for awhile, the words are no longer there with which to express himself. Therefore prayer which is continued even when the pray-er has for some time the feeling that he is praying only from habit is always helpful. In the depths of the soul more happens through *every* prayer than we imagine.

Thus even an article about sin and psychotherapy must end by pointing out that the resolution of all tensions, anxieties and guilt feelings will finally be impossible without prayer. But psychotherapy must often help to open up the way to this ultimate solution.

—Translated by Erminie Lantero

Albert Schweitzer's Covenant With Life

WILLIAM DAVIDSON GEOGHEGAN

ON JANUARY 14, 1960, Albert Schweitzer was eighty-five years old, and the time seems ripe for a fresh appraisal of the essence of his life and thought. In recent years Schweitzer has become somewhat of a cult-hero of the ecclesiastically disenfranchised, and as a consequence too little attention has been paid to his real position as a prophetic thinker on the leading edge of twentieth-century Christian faith. To a much greater extent than either his liberal admirers or conservative detractors are apparently capable of acknowledging, he stands today as a foremost exponent of a spirit which is profoundly, sensitively and authentically Christian.

Unfortunately he appears to have become the victim of the paradox that both too much and too little is known about him. Rare, for example, are the college chapels whose walls have not resounded to the glowing tributes paid this Olympian show-piece, who is untiringly praised for his accomplishments as philosopher, theologian, physician, authority on Bach and the construction and playing of organs, missionary to Africa, and Nobel Peace Prize winner. His basic concept of "Reverence for Life" has been circulated so widely that it seems to have been reduced to little more than a shallow slogan—like a mint-crisp coin whose surface has been worn smooth from having passed through too many hands. So far as the limits of this essay permit, I aim to show Schweitzer as a man of depth and sensibility, whose sense of thought and existence, of Christianity, and of synthesis ought to be taken more seriously in the theological conversations of our day. For this may prove to be a voice which echoes a real covenant with life.

I. SCHWEITZER'S SENSE OF THOUGHT AND EXISTENCE

A distinctive and fundamental feature of his thought is the concept of "resignation," by which he does not mean an enervated acquiescence in the way things are, but a renunciation of the intellectually pretentious claim on the part of religion that its function is to *explain* the world as if it were a kind of science or philosophy. Positively, resignation is the

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price paid for inward freedom. Resigned, the thinker can enjoy a stability independent of external events, whether they be pleasant or unpleasant. Resignation from intellectual pretentiousness and from domination by externalities frees one for resignation *to*, i.e., commitment to ideal ends.

The most basic of these ends is "sincerity," a rich word which combines the meanings of integrity, openness and honesty. The idea is not dissimilar to Heidegger's concept of "authentic existence"; and it clearly has considerable relevance for an age in which masses of men, out of desire for effortless distraction or cheap entertainment, permit themselves to be captivated by mass media—the perfect symbol of which is the insidiousness and meretriciousness of most TV. Of course, the development and commercial exploitation of television postdates Schweitzer's major work in social criticism by several decades, but a vivid image from the first volume of his *Philosophy of Civilization*¹ (first published in 1923) appears to validate his credentials as a social prophet. There he speaks of modern mass man as being like a rubber ball which has lost its resiliency and has become little more than a passive recipient of external impressions.

This is not to suggest that Schweitzer's stature as a thinker rests upon his success as a social prophet, as if he were an avatar, say, of Sri Aurobindo's "gnostic being"; for his thinking goes much deeper than social prognostication. For example, the imperative to be sincere with oneself enjoins meditation as the mind's way of taking hold of itself. This leads to a characteristically simple, yet penetrating, conclusion: If I am sincere with myself, then I must forgive without limit offenses against me. If I fail to do so I am being dishonest with myself, for I suggest that I myself do not need unlimited forgiveness.

When it comes to the social application of such ideas, Schweitzer becomes perhaps somewhat quixotic. He suggests, for example, that if an elite, guided by the principle of *noblesse oblige*, were to rebel against herd mentality a new climate of social opinion might be created, thus leavening the torpid social lump. In view of our knowledge of those who control and patronize mass media such a proposal seems quite unlikely to be realized. Still, his basic analysis may be every bit as sound, for example, as that in Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, to the major thesis of which Schweitzer's own social thought bears some striking similarities.

¹ Schweitzer, A., *The Decay and Restoration of Civilization*, Beacon Press, pp. 29f. All quotations from Schweitzer in this essay are taken from *Albert Schweitzer: An Anthology*, ed. Charles R. Joy, Beacon Press, 1947; but the original source will also be indicated.

His orientation, moreover, seems quite sound. Like some other Christian thinkers today, Schweitzer is a man for whom thought is not "an eighteenth-century aberration." As Tillich speaks of questions of ultimate concern, so Schweitzer speaks of "elemental thinking" about whether we shall lose, or preserve and enhance, our *human* being. At heart, thoughtlessness lies behind the decadence of our Western civilization. We outgrow our youthful impulse to reflect upon the deep and ageless questions to our unmaning. The springs are "choked with rubbish." We look for help from those we think might know. But theologians construct their monuments of antiquarian erudition; philosophers cultivate a "virtuosity of technique"; and the physical scientists seek little more than the "establishment of individual facts." And the upshot of this intellectual irresponsibility is that modern mass man is a macerated being.

Schweitzer places thought squarely in the context of existence. Somewhat as Crane Brinton does in his latest book, *A History of Western Morals*, Schweitzer argues that a moral civilization can be preserved and advanced through a union of rationality, ethical energy, and a will to progress. Enlightenment Christianity is for him the best historical example of this happy union. When Christianity was suffused with rationality it saw that its great commandment of love entailed—both logically and sociologically, so to speak—that inhumane practices like slavery and torture ought to be opposed and eliminated. For Schweitzer the archetypal personality of this period is Goethe, who adorned his genius by his willingness to share fully—even, it would almost seem, kenotically—in the life of man and of his age.

While Schweitzer believes strongly in progress, he does not regard it as inevitable, for that would render otiose the ethical striving upon which all moral progress is based. He eschews Hegel and all his works with the resoluteness, if not the vehemence, of a Kierkegaard. Man today is "on a dark journey in a time of darkness." Sometimes melancholy seems to ooze from the fibers of Schweitzer's being: "Only at quite rare moments have I felt really glad to be alive."² Yet he is scarcely a Barth or a Niebuhr morosely surveying man's seemingly ineradicable penchant for fouling his own nest. He knows that we live no longer in the eighteenth century; that ours is, as Elton Trueblood has aptly put it, a "cut-flower" civilization; and that the disproportion between our technological giantism on the one hand and our ethical puerility on the other is as monstrous as it is grotesque. Nevertheless, progress is as possible as it is desirable and necessary.

² *Out of My Life and Thought*, Henry Holt and Company, 1933, p. 279f.

His thinking is somewhat perplexing at this point. On the one hand, some of his writings which are more in the tradition of classical realism suggest that if we construct a plausible *Weltanschauung*, we may derive an effective ethic from it. On the other hand, Schweitzer speaks more frequently of a Kantian type of autonomous ethic, and still more often of a prophetic ethic—*contra mundum*. This dual tendency in his thinking appears to be based upon a kind of ditheism which holds that man encounters God in nature as “an enigmatic creative force,” while encountering him in himself as “ethical will.”³ On balance, however, Schweitzer indicates his allegiance to a unitary concept of God. The personal God of ethical love, he suggests, is related to the impersonal creative force of the cosmos as the warm, moving Gulf Current is *in* but not *of* the cold, relatively motionless ocean which surrounds it. Again, “The nature of the living Being without me I can understand only through the living Being which is within me.”⁴

Perhaps this is what Schweitzer is seeming to accomplish in his career as medical missionary—a complex of activities which combines religious energies and ethical imperatives related to God as “ethical will” and that synthesis of art and science which is medicine related to God as “enigmatic creative force.” However this may be, and however pessimistic the coloring of his knowledge, Schweitzer’s willing and hoping are manifestly optimistic, a fact which is based in no small part upon his understanding of Christianity.

II. SCHWEITZER’S SENSE OF CHRISTIANITY

For Schweitzer the fundamental question which any religion can ask is, “How can man be in God and in the world at the same time?” For him Christianity is a matter of being *in* the world but not *of* it. Christianity commands: “You must become free from the world and from yourself, in order to work in the world as an instrument of God.”⁵ Schweitzer’s own life abundantly illustrates his devotion to that basic principle of religious behavior which Toynbee has called the pattern of “withdrawal-and-return” and which, before that, Hocking had identified as the Principle of Alternation. Schweitzer is profoundly at home with what might be called the two-sidedness of Christianity and its reading of reality through the prisms of dialectic and paradox. Since he wrote most of his important works before these terms became fashionable, his concept seems all the more worth looking into.

³ *Christianity and the Religions of the World*, Henry Holt and Company, 1931, p. 74.

⁴ *Life*, pp. 127f.

⁵ *Christianity*, p. 37.

His basic apprehension of God in relation to the world is dialectical. In his ethical theism God is apprehended as "a Will that is distinct from the world and compels us not to conform to the world."⁶ He is no less sensitive to the paradoxical nature of existence. In a sentence worthy of a Pascal, he states: "The essence of the universe is full of meaning in its meaninglessness, meaningless in its fulness of meaning."⁷ His concept of "profound naïveté" (to be distinguished, of course, from ignorant simple-mindedness) suggests not only the "coincidence of opposites" of Nicholas of Cusa but also, and even more appositely, his doctrine of "learned ignorance."

The distinctiveness of Christianity inheres not only in its sense of dialectic and paradox, but even more in its sense of the ethical and of the eschatological. The basic criterion of the value of a religion is the extent to which it provides "permanent and profound incentives toward the inward perfecting of the personality and to ethical activity."⁸ In this respect, Christianity at its best ranks highest among all the major religions of the world. But the Christian ethic is based upon Christian eschatology. The eschatological interpretation of Christianity is a dominant motif of Protestant theology today, and there can be little doubt that Schweitzer's justly famous *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* is to a great extent responsible for this fact. Like Bultmann, Schweitzer holds, in effect, that Christian eschatology is based upon the principle that the Christian ethical imperative flows from the Christian indicative. This gives rise to the seeming paradox that because the Christian *is* in Christ, he therefore must *become* a Christian.

Schweitzer "idealizes" Jesus without dividing his substance into, or confusing his person with, a Docetic phantom. Like Paul, he would apprehend him not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit; and he does not fall victim to the illusion of "optical assimilation"—as if Jesus were little more than an object for pious contemplation. The trite distinction between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith" vanishes into the realm of the trivial where it belongs; "Jesus as spiritually arisen within men" is what matters.⁹ But how does this come about?

One recalls Whitehead's celebrated definition of religion as what an individual does with his own solitariness. Schweitzer's concept is similar except that he adds, and stresses, the idea of *encounter*. The necessary condition for the personal appropriation of the spirit of Jesus consists in leaving "the

⁶ *Christianity*, pp. 72f.

⁷ *Civilization and Ethics*, The Macmillan Company, 1929, pp. 211f.

⁸ *Christianity*, pp. 26f.

⁹ *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, The Macmillan Company, 1926, p. 399.

individual man alone with the sayings of Jesus."¹⁰ He adds, "Every saying contains in its own way the whole Jesus."¹¹ That individual saying which seems to have struck fire in Schweitzer's soul is, "He who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 10:39, RSV). In fact, he traces his ethic of reverence for life back to that of Jesus. It is, he says, the ethic of Jesus "brought to philosophical expression, extended into cosmical form, and conceived as intellectually necessary."¹² For Schweitzer, Jesus Christ is alive, mysterious, and above all imperious—radically challenging the individual in his solitariness before the unfathomable enigmas of God, the world, and human existence, to the preservation and qualitative enhancement of life.

His interpretation of Jesus is based upon Paul, as is his distinction between what is lasting and what is passing in the Christian faith. He dwells upon the theme that Christianity today desperately needs renewal if our civilization is to survive, and proposes that this can be accomplished through reprimatination—"a return to the immediacy and intensity of the faith of early Christianity"—in today's striving for the Kingdom of God.¹³ No doubt the latter is a phrase which echoes quaintly and perhaps even hollowly in many a chastened Protestant ear today. But Schweitzer indulges himself infrequently in talk about "building the Kingdom of God" or "bringing it in." For the ethical endeavor of man is only "like a powerful prayer to God, that He may cause the Kingdom to appear without delay."¹⁴

Despite the time gap, Bultmann's explicit existentialism and other marked differences, Schweitzer's interpretation of Paul is similar to Bultmann's on several basic points. Where Bultmann speaks of Paul's "clarifying the contents of faith," Schweitzer speaks of his having foreseen and having made provision for the early obsolescence of the external, literal details of primitive Christian eschatology. Like Bultmann, Schweitzer believes that the study of Paul must begin with the *kerygma* which he shared with the primitive Hellenistic Church. And both dismiss the well-worn distinction between the religion of Jesus and Paul's religion *about* Jesus as superficial and misleading.

Paul clarified and purified the primitive concept of Christ's spirit when he interpreted it as producing ethical guidance, establishing inward freedom

¹⁰ *Quest*, p. 398.

¹¹ *Quest*, p. 399.

¹² *Ethics*, pp. 257f.

¹³ *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, Henry Holt and Company, 1931, p. 384.

¹⁴ *Christianity*, pp. 16f.

("weep as though we wept not, rejoice as though we rejoiced not"), and bringing forth its finest flower in the impulse to self-giving love. Underlying this concept is Paul's union of mysticism and ethics. His mysticism is not one of identity, envisaging union with the ontological absolute. It is both Christocentric and ethical. For Schweitzer the core of mysticism is "actual experience of the world's essential being."¹⁵ In Paul's Christ-mysticism, man yields his will to Christ's "in order to experience in Him the true law of [his] existence."¹⁶ This yielding is matched by "a 'being-taken-possession-of' by the will of love, which in us comes to consciousness of itself, and strives in us to become act."¹⁷

It has been not infrequently suggested that Schweitzer's interpretation of Christianity is too unrealistic, perhaps too evangelical, and certainly too individualistic. Some of this, to be sure, may be inverse praise. But the record ought to show that he does have a keen sense of the importance of the Christian community. He describes the social phase of Paul's Christ-mysticism as "a 'belonging together' with Christ as our Lord."¹⁸ By any pertinent standard this seems impeccably orthodox, as does his view that the Church is comprised of individuals who have, in the Pauline sense, died and risen with Christ. At heart, Christianity is a matter of personal appropriation and of personal expression: "We can only bring so much of the Kingdom of God into the world as we possess within us."¹⁹ Such is the end for which the Church exists as means.

Schweitzer is unfriendly toward what he calls a dogmatic or cloistered Christianity—a "little faith." His Archimedean point is profoundly Christian, but his spiritual horizons are not bounded by the West, by the Church, by Christianity, nor even by (and here is one point upon which he would agree wholeheartedly with Karl Barth) "religion." His grand vision, perceived just before his lines of perspective dissolve into the vanishing point, is of a synthesis of thought and existence, spirit and life.

III. SCHWEITZER'S SENSE OF SYNTHESIS

Schweitzer arrived at this conception of reverence for life in a way not unlike that in which other important discoveries in the sphere of thought have been made: after prolonged conscious struggle to solve a problem, the long-sought unifying idea suddenly appears in an apparently irrelevant

¹⁵ *Ethics*, p. xviii.

¹⁶ *Mysticism*, p. 378.

¹⁷ *Mysticism*, pp. 378f.

¹⁸ *Mysticism*, p. 378.

¹⁹ *Mysticism*, pp. 388f.

context. He was embarked upon an errand of mercy on an African river during the dry season. For nearly three days he had been covering sheets of paper with disconnected sentences as he sought to keep his mind concentrated upon the problem of discovering an "elementary and universal conception of the ethical." Late in the third day, as the party made its way through a herd of hippopotamuses, he says, "there flashed upon my mind, unforeseen and unsought, the phrase 'Reverence for Life'."²⁰

This conception is sometimes uncritically identified with the Hindu and Buddhist doctrine of *ahimsa*, or non-injury to any living being, which the Jains have made the cardinal doctrine of their religious ethic. Schweitzer freely acknowledges the part-Indian origin of his concept and, of course, observes non-injury to the fullest practicable extent. (The practice annoys, when it does not dismay, many adherents to Western medical standards as they observe at Lambaréné the comparatively slovenly conditions which it encourages.) Nevertheless, *ahimsa* is more like the outer husk than the kernel of reverence for life. Reverence for life is not an autonomous principle, or end in itself, but the handmaiden of outgoing, practical compassion. Moreover, the subscriber to this principle must assume the responsibility of making discriminate acts of judgment in applying it; for example, in choosing between one life and another, when the option is forced.

In his exposition of reverence for life the ditheistic perplexity noted previously arises again. The issue is whether reverence for life has an ontological basis, or is a "pure ethic" of the Kantian type. On the one hand, Schweitzer says, "To have reverence in the face of life is to be in the grasp of the eternal, unoriginated, forward-pushing will, which is the foundation of all being,"²¹ and that as one practices reverence for life "he realizes the active becoming-one with the Primal Source of Being to which this life belongs."²² Yet he goes on to say that reverence for life has nothing to do with explanations of the objective world but is "pure religious feeling founded altogether in implicit necessity and therefore devoid of care about results."²³

While there may be ambiguity in Schweitzer's concept, in the long run it seems to be resolved in favor of the ethical. Furthermore, there may be a justification for the ontological reference of the concept because of its value as a *symbol of the solidarity of life*. If we assume that reverence

²⁰ *Life*, p. 185f.

²¹ *Ethics*, p. 223.

²² *Indian Thought and Its Development*, Beacon Press, p. 262.

²³ *Ethics*, p. 223.

for life is primarily an ethical and religious *a priori*—something “founded upon itself”—then a line of thinking begins from this point which develops in the following way. The immediate fact of consciousness is “*I will to live.*”²⁴ The will to live is “determined to live itself out” and, beyond this, “to realize itself to the highest possible degree of perfection.”²⁵ It desires to survive and, so to speak, to arrive. As it thrusts itself forward, it generates reflective freedom. It realizes that it is free to choose whether to live or die. The existence of reverence for life implies as its correlative the possibility and—here is the dread tragic flaw—the actuality of irreverence for life.

But positively to reverence life is to experience existence as “something of value *per se*”; and as this happens it becomes clear that *thought is a part of life*. When a man affirms his will to live he does a natural and an honest thing: “He confirms an act which has already been accomplished in his instinctive thought by repeating it in his conscious thought.”²⁶ Thus to affirm life is to live optimistically; not floating dreamily in a miasma of “over-indulgent judgments of any kind,” but “conceiving and willing the ideal.”

The ideal is solidarity of life in both a vitalistic and, primarily, an ethical sense. Like Kierkegaard in his *Journals*, Schweitzer has a story about geese, although his point is quite different. The point of Kierkegaard’s story is that the genuine spirit of Christianity suffers greatly from the craven sluggishness of herd-thinking Christians. With this, of course, Schweitzer would agree; but the point of his story of wild geese is that the flock will wait for an injured member to recover, and then with him the flock will resume its flight.²⁷ Schweitzer reasons that vitalistic solidarity of life points to the Christian law of love: If I yearn for life and well-being and shun death and pain, then the essence of ethical behavior will be for me to respect like dispositions in others. This, or something very much like it, must be true, if life is a solidarity.

Reverence for life is an absolute ethical imperative. It has what Reinhold Niebuhr has called “the relevance of an impossible ideal.” It raises man’s horizons beyond a myopic anthropocentrism, but it does not encourage a perfectionism which plunges man into despair when he fails to attain the ideal. For when reverence for life is reflective, it is also

²⁴ “The Ethics of Reverence for Life,” *Christendom*, Vol. I, No. 2, Winter 1936, pp. 225-239.

²⁵ *Ethics*, p. 222.

²⁶ *Life*, pp. 186ff.

²⁷ “The Ethics of Reverence for Life,” p. 238.

resigned: whether a particular attempt to preserve or enhance life succeeds or fails, the reflective person, loyal to his basic principle, has nevertheless increased in some measure his own inner freedom from externalities. For he is at least aware of the difference between them and himself.

The doctrine of inward freedom which is of Stoic provenance is the link connecting Jainist *ahimsa* and the spirit of Christianity in Schweitzer's thinking about reverence for life. As he says: "Only he who experiences inner freedom from external events in profound surrender to his own will-to-live is capable of the profound and permanent surrender of himself for the sake of other life."²⁸ This seems a most illuminating example of Schweitzer's synthesis of Jainist *ahimsa*, Stoic autarchy, and the Gospel counsel that one must lose his life in order to find it.

Volumes might be written about applications of the basic principle to particular topics such as pacifism, vivisection, birth control in the context of an explosively expanding world population, euthanasia, and so forth. Since this is not possible here, let us consider one limitation upon the principle. Irreverence for life may come from what someone has called "left-over life to kill," a macabre circumstance of which the most dramatic example is probably suicide. Schweitzer seems to have more to say about this subject than most of today's ethical and religious writers, and what he has to say is about what one would expect of a sensible and well-informed person. As a physician, he regards it as a climactic symptom of grave sickness. As an admirer of the Stoics, he interprets it as a negative symbol of human freedom. As a philosopher, he understands it as the logical outcome of a pessimistic, world- and life-denying *Weltanschauung*; and its absence as proof of the inconsistency of such a world view. Most significantly, he distinguishes clearly between suicide and self-sacrifice. If the motive of an act of self-sacrifice is reflective and sincere, the act is not self-destructive but is the expression of world- and life-affirmation. If one sacrifices his life for a purpose greater than himself, he is replacing a lesser value with a greater one and is thus affirming the value of life in its solidarity and in its characteristic capacity for growth.

A synthesis of ideas and historic tendencies of thought is one thing; a personal synthesis is another. Schweitzer appears to have succeeded in doing both. The man and his thought are very closely connected and work together harmoniously. The parts co-operate in this man of parts. In his case, for example, in a more than ordinary way "the child is father to the man." Three aspects of his spiritual thinking as a boy extend fruitfully

²⁸ *Ethics*, pp. 258ff.

into his mature years. These are his sensitivity to pain in other beings; his unusual capacity for feeling gratitude, and the correlative obligation to make repayment, somehow, for what he had received; and, finally, his developing repugnance to seeing himself as the sole "lord," expender, and disposer of his own existence.

If the significance of this early development is grasped, then two great decisions of his young manhood seem less unnatural than they might otherwise appear to be in cold print. When he was twenty-one, Schweitzer resolved to devote himself until the age of thirty to preaching, scholarly work and music, and then to more direct service of his fellow man. In the autumn of 1904, some eight years after his initial resolve, he happened to read an article, "The Needs of the Congo Mission," in the magazine of the Paris Missionary Society. This crystallized his earlier resolve, and gave it direction. His decision, of course, was to become a medical missionary to Africa, but it was not made without "fear and trembling." There were the protests of friends, as well as his own grave doubts about the enormous sacrifices he anticipated having to make (which, incidentally, all turned out to be Abrahamic). The success of his subsequent career, particularly the creative and inspiring influence which his example has had upon others, is widely known.

Threaded through the life and thinking of the man is idealism—not in the unfortunate pejorative sense of living on illusions—but an idealism effectively launched by a leap of faith. In his case this leap is not a futile gesture of defying reality but rather like the great, vaulting leap of a dancer, in which strength and grace are summoned together and cast successfully in gravity's prosaic face.

His leap of faith has been successful because of its purposiveness and realism. Schweitzer seems to have devoted his life to demonstrating that the limits to the accomplishments of a man who has made up his mind are ever receding. In the last analysis, he holds, man's basic orientation toward life is not a matter of mood, disposition or external circumstance but "a determination of the will. The question is not so much what man expects or does not expect from existence, but what use he aims at making of it."²⁰ This purposive idealism has a realistic core. He recognizes that by middle age most people have had their youthful idealism battered to pieces. Some others, with a residue of ideals left, console themselves for their puny achievements by such rationalizations as that they are producing as much as their character allows, or that their success is as yet hidden from them.

²⁰ *Indian*, pp. 2f.

With these excuses of middle-aged defeatism Schweitzer has little patience:

That ideals, when they are brought into contact with reality, are usually crushed by facts does not mean that they are bound from the very beginning to capitulate to facts, but merely that our ideals are not strong enough; and they are not strong enough because they are not pure and strong and stable enough in ourselves.³⁰

His thought on idealism closes full circle with the concept of resignation with which it begins. Success in idealistic endeavors is possible if a man does not waste his time and energy contending with men and facts "but in all experiences retires upon himself, and looks for the ultimate causes of things in himself."³¹ In the tensile interplay between idealism and resignation the major elements of his thinking come to their consummation: thought, existence, dialectic, paradox, ethics, eschatology, synthesis. But perhaps Albert Schweitzer's signal contribution to our age will prove to be his ability to make Christ's hard saying about losing one's life in order to find it seem less remote and austere to a generation which is at once too skeptical and too credulous. What is apparently for so many a cryptic saying, as interpreted in the light of his life and thought, may become filled with the promise of a covenant with life.

³⁰ *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*, The Macmillan Company, pp. 99f.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

The Sociology of Religion: Some Problems and Prospects

ROBERT LEE

I

TO REPORT the "coming of age" of sociology in America is hardly to bring startling news. Yet it seems phenomenal that yesterday's fledgling discipline should today achieve so wide an influence in so short a time. A certain mystique about sociological literature has developed in recent years, not unlike the fascination, in some circles, of the writings of existentialism. Works penned by David Riesman, Margaret Mead, William Whyte, Russell Lynes, C. Wright Mills, and Vance Packard have become best sellers and *au courant* conversational pieces.

In addition to these popular commentators who are reaching a responsive mass audience, there are other scholars who are receiving attentive hearings as they advance the study of sociology in academic centers. College after college has begun or expanded its offerings in the field. Increasing recognition is given to the works of men like Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton, Paul Lazarsfeld, Kingsley Davis, and Robin Williams.

Sociologists find themselves called upon to serve as consultants. Government agencies (notably the Supreme Court in its historic 1954 desegregation ruling) cite the findings of sociological analysts. Waving their magic wands, the industrial and commercial markets seek to lure highly trained sociologists away from academic posts. Foundations and public agencies provide grants to support social research. New research bureaus with sizable budgets and staffs are exploring areas of basic and applied research at such institutions as Columbia, Harvard, California, Chicago, and Michigan—to name a few of the research and survey centers. The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, modeled after Princeton's Institute for Advanced Studies, was launched in recent years at Stanford, California. A conservative estimate of the nation's annual

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expenditures for research in all of the social sciences amounts to the not insignificant sum of \$215 million.

Only in recent decades has sociology found such widespread acceptance in academic, governmental, business, and popular circles. Such development tends to confirm the self-fulfilling prophecies of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, early fathers of the new discipline in the mid-nineteenth century. While it is doubtful that philosophy has reached a post-Aristotelian age, one would not question that in sociology Comte's and Spencer's anachronistic evolutionary framework has been superseded. So rapid have been the advances that much of the work of early twentieth-century American sociologists seems quaint today. Significantly, many of these pioneer leaders were recruited from the ranks of the clergy. In an earlier day it was not uncommon to find a sociologist who was the son of a missionary or who was himself an ex-seminarian.

II

Granted that sociology in general is coming of age and is gaining widespread recognition for its potential contribution to human knowledge, can one make the same claim for that specialized branch of sociology known as the sociology of religion?

The answer to this question must be a qualified "no." And our primary task in this article is to identify some of the roadblocks by surveying the present status of the field with particular focus on a few problem areas. I say a qualified rather than an absolute no, because there are surely some hopeful signs of revival and acceleration.

Two new journals devoted exclusively to the sociology of religion have been launched. The *Archives de Sociologie des Religions* was founded in Paris in 1956 and *The Review of Religious Research*, sponsored by the Religious Research Association, began as a quarterly in 1959.

Denominations and councils of churches have established bureaus of research and survey in rapid numbers, so that the demand for trained personnel to direct these agencies exceeds the supply. At the National Council of Churches alone, ten staff members carry a research portfolio. The New York Office for Field Research of the United Presbyterian Church is manned by four full-time researchers, two of whom have earned a Ph.D. in sociology. Contrast this situation with the 1930's when H. Paul Douglass lamented the fact that church researchers were confronted with a non-co-operative, often hostile church public; today the findings of religious researchers receive a friendly and generally sympathetic hearing.

Unlike earlier publications, rarely does a new sociological textbook today omit the subject of religion or the church. Two recent high-quality introductory texts (H. M. Johnson, *Sociology*; ¹ and Robin Williams, *American Society*, ² contain illuminating chapters on religion. Professional sociologists in both state and private universities are turning their attention to religious research in increasing numbers. A rash of articles reporting their findings has been appearing in professional journals. Finally, a first-class textbook, J. Milton Yinger's *Religion, Society and the Individual* ³ appeared in 1957 and now takes the place of Joachim Wach's turgid and widely ranging *Sociology of Religion*. Other books and monographs have been recently issued, and several readers are in process of publication. Outstanding Jewish and Roman Catholic sociologists of religion have emerged, as represented by such individuals as Marshall Sklare, Thomas O'Dea, Joseph Fichter, and John Thomas.

Two professional groups of sociologists of religion, both founded within the past decade, are now fully organized—the Religious Research Association and the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. At the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, a section is devoted to papers in the sociology of religion.

With this flurry of activity there is some hope that the sociology of religion is emerging from its infancy and that serious sociological questions about religion are beginning to be raised. Despite these promising signs, however, the net results are not too impressive. The sociology of religion is still in search of definition. It is moving along several diverse lines without much consensus regarding its proper province.

The history of the sociology of religion is indeed a checkered one. It began so promisingly with the seminal works of Emile Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and Ernst Troeltsch's *Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*. Even Frederic Le Play, French sociologist, who, along with Comte and Spencer, is hailed as the father of modern sociology, devoted considerable attention to the study of religion in his pioneer surveys of rural and village life. With such auspicious beginnings, the field then lapsed into a deep slumber, from which it has yet to awaken and to rise to the level of its early classics.

On the American scene, despite a plethora of works, there are only a

¹ Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1960.

² Revised second edition, Alfred A. Knopf, 1960.

³ The Macmillan Company, 1957.

few studies of significant quality. These would include: Richard Niebuhr's *Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929), Liston Pope's *Millhands and Preachers* (1941), Kenneth Underwood's *Protestant and Catholic* (1957), and Paul Harrison's *Authority and Power in the Free Church Tradition* (1959). Hence our skepticism may rightly be based on the fact that while sociology in general has progressed by leaps and bounds, the sociology of religion has yet to come up to par with the pioneer works of Weber, Durkheim, and Troeltsch. Writing in a similar vein, Professor Charles Y. Glock avers:

None of the work done to assess the state of religion in America currently or historically meets even the minimum standards of scientific inquiry. Investigators and commentators have not given adequate attention to conceptualizing religion or religiousness in a comprehensive way. Consequently, they have been considerably less than thorough in their selection of indicators of religiousness. And, in applying the indicators they have selected, they too often have relied upon evidence of dubious quality. Their work, as a result, does not provide a satisfactory basis for assessing either the state or the meaning of religion in America.⁴

III

For an understanding of the present trends in this developing field, it may be instructive to turn to some informal issues, which have implications for the future course of the sociology of religion.

The first issue concerns the question of whether there can legitimately be a sociology of religion. In a brilliant article entitled "Prophets, Priests, and Social Scientists," Professor Albert Salomon of the New School for Social Research answers this question negatively.⁵ He contends that there cannot be a sociology of religion—only a sociology of irreligion. Salomon maintains that in studying religion the sociologist, in effect, only documents the "drama of the defeat of the religious intention." And Samuel C. Kincheloe, formerly at Chicago Theological Seminary, would seem to confirm this notion in his well-known study which carries the picturesque title, "Behavior Sequence of a Dying Church."⁶

But the fact that one could also conduct a study on the "Behavior Sequence of a Revitalized Church" would seem to refute Salomon's somewhat pessimistic prophecies that sociology of religion can only spin a story of doom and defeat. It is more correct to say that sociology of religion performs an unmasking function. If, in the process of unmasking, imper-

⁴ Glock, Charles Y., "The Religious Revival in America," in *Religion and the Face of America*, edited by Jane C. Zahn. Berkeley: University of California, University Extension, 1959, p. 41.

⁵ *Commentary*, June, 1949.

⁶ *Religious Education* (XXIV), Jan., 1929.

fections and shortcomings are revealed, so be it. But just as psychology is not confined to abnormal behavior, so the sociologist of religion does not concentrate on religious pathology.

Professor Salomon commits the error of misplaced concreteness. To describe a person or an institution by dwelling only on its dysfunctions and deficiencies is to deal with something less than the whole truth. Not that there isn't ample evidence to support Salomon's contention. Is it not a curious fact that American sociologists have been particularly drawn to the study of small sectarian groups, preferably of a bizarre character? To judge by the relative amount of research, the dysfunctional qualities of sects and cults have held far greater fascination than the more conventional denominational structures. But such neglect does not prescribe the limits of sociological investigation. Irreligion is neither a necessary nor a sufficient focus of the sociology of religion. Salomon's critique would be justified only if one adopts the view that the very nature of religion itself is irreligion; or, as Erich Fromm contends in his book, *The Sane Society*, if society itself is insane, therefore there is need for a "pathology of normalcy."

Having dealt briefly with the question of the legitimacy of the discipline, we now turn to a second problem: the seemingly strong association of primitive religion with the sociology of religion. Only gradually is the sociology of religion beginning to free itself from this tie. Consider this distinguished list of social scientists who have devoted attention to primitive religions: Spencer, Durkheim, Müller, Tylor, Kidd, Lang, Frazer, Levy-Bruhl, Benedict, Radcliffe-Brown, Goldenweiser, Malinowski, Radin, Lowie, Wallis, Goode, Evans-Pritchard, and Swanson.

The question why social scientists have manifested such deep interest in primitive religion merits some attention. In the first place, it is obvious that a relatively static primitive religion and society is easier to study, more manageable, and less complex. Despite the fact that religion permeates all of primitive culture, it is more susceptible to cultural analysis than appears to be the case for modern secularized society. This, then, is the methodological answer to our question. A corollary of this answer is the concern to search for the origin of social institutions, so prevalent among those who shared the evolutionary hypothesis. By turning to primitive religion, it was believed that the element of mystery in religion might be explained.

Another answer to our question may be derived from examining the predispositions of the social scientists themselves. The suspicion may be

entertained that, at least for some students, their interest in primitive religion betrays a commitment to a particular conception of religion. The accounts of primitive religion could well leave the impression that religion is nothing but a survival of the jungle—based on the fear of ghosts, worship of ancestors, or a naïve view of nature. Many students of primitive religion sought to study the past in order to understand the present. But, as a matter of fact, that transfer was never made, and consequently the role of religion in modern society received scant attention. Although primitive religion may be easier to study than contemporary patterns of religion, this does not provide an excuse for neglecting the latter for the sake of the former. The tendency to equate earlier expressions of religion with later forms can unconsciously be a way of dismissing or minimizing religion. It obviously follows that if primitive religion is identified with contemporary religion, this becomes detrimental to the fuller development of the sociology of religion.

Earlier I suggested that sociology of religion is moving along several directions. One may identify at least three interest groups professionally concerned with furthering the discipline. The first group, consisting of university and college professors of sociology, may be divided into two subtypes. First, there are those who find in religion a fruitful field for scholarship—individuals like Yinger of Oberlin, Glock of California, Nottingham of Queens College, Lenski of Michigan, Hoult of Wayne State University. These are among the sociologists whose productive scholarship is primarily in the field of religion. The second type consists of many of the major social theorists—Parsons, Becker, Merton, Davies, and others—who deal with religion not merely because it is a fact of human existence, but also because any desire to integrate knowledge or to establish a “general theory of human action” cannot exclude the religious dimension. The interplay between these two subtypes on the college campus should bear important future fruits.

A second group finds its numbers among seminary professors, whose chairs are variously named: “Christian Sociology,” “Religion and Society,” “Sociology of Religion,” “Ethics and Society,” “Social Ethics,” “Christianity and Society,” and “Church and Community.” From the titles which these seminary chairs bear, one can well imagine the diversity of interest, background, and competence of their occupants.

The third force is a sizable corps of religious researchers employed by denominations and councils of churches and research agencies. Of course, variations exist within these three groupings. But the fact that each group

is related to different institutional settings means that each is oriented to different sets of demands and expectations. Each is geared to a different audience and each operates under different institutional constraints and personal motivations. For example, with few exceptions, the denominational and council personnel have a pragmatic, programmatic, and policy orientation and produce little in the way of basic research. Almost exclusively their studies are directed toward institutional effectiveness and church extension. The seminary professor must relate his teaching and study to theology if he seeks to be relevant in the seminary context. His interest is likely to be that of institutional self-understanding of the life and work of the church as it interacts with society. The university sociologist of religion is more empirically oriented and is likely to have a more versatile utilization of research techniques. He tends to have a keen interest in the comparative aspects of religion and displays less interest in theological questions.

Now it would be erroneous to leave the impression that these various groups stand in opposing camps. But it remains true that the sociology of religion is perceived in different ways and given different emphases by members of each group. While no cold war exists, there has not emerged a dominant leader who is paving the way or who has the equal respect of all three groups. Any breakthrough in the sociology of religion will necessitate leaders from each of the three groups who can originate new theories and bring to bear a power of synthesis and a power of analysis which is equally great. Needless to remark, the amount and quality of interaction and conversation among these three segments in years to come will have important consequences for the future development of the discipline.

IV

Much of the confusion in defining and delimiting the sociology of religion may inhere in the very nature of the study of religion and of sociology. As a necessary first step in the process of clarification, the tensions between these two disciplines should be clearly articulated. In order to sharpen the differences, we shall consider three polarities in the relationship between the study of religion and sociology.

1. *The Significant Variable.* The fundamental indices and categories with which the sociologist works and implicitly deems important are precisely those factors which a theological perspective tends to regard as superficial, extraneous, and transitory, if not fallacious distinctions. These so-called sociological variables include class, race, sex, age, income, edu-

cational level, marital status, etc. In numerous empirical studies, they are correlated with a whole host of behavior patterns and attitudes. By and large theologians tend to view these variables as divisive and as standing in need of transformation. In polarized and doubtless oversimplified terms, we may say that while sociology emphasizes the social setting in which man is culturally conditioned, if not culturally bound, contemporary theology accentuates man's capacity as a free moral agent to transcend his environment and to be self-directing.

Another way of stating this polarity is to employ C. Wright Mills' helpful distinction between personal troubles and public issues. Troubles are problems which affect me in a deeply personal way, whereas issues are related to the social structure and must be resolved in terms of major policy decisions. If I am attacked by a juvenile gang, I am faced with a *trouble*, which may cause me considerable pain and inconvenience. But if delinquency becomes a menace to the community, this is an *issue* which calls for basic changes in a number of social institutions. Theology has been quite successful at the level of dealing with the troubles of individuals or small personal groups. But in dealing with issues, with the large-scale corporate and communal concerns of man, theological analysis has been minimal. Perhaps this is so because so much of recent theology centers on man in his immediate personal and interpersonal relationships and exhibits little concern with the larger structural relationships of society. I suspect that this "bias" accounts, in part, for the closer affinity between psychology and theology as compared to sociology and theology, and for the ready alliance of theology with existentialism.

Focus on the individual and on primary group relationships as a sole or inevitable attribute of theology is doubtful. For there are certainly ingredients in the Judeo-Christian faith which suggest otherwise—the judgment visited upon Israel and her national penitence, the sense of the Koinonia, the communal character of history, and the Pauline stress on membership in the Body of Christ. But, of late, it seems true that in many quarters faith is interpreted as a matter of individual encounter between God and man, and the quest for meaning as the quest of the individual for his own personal meaning. With considerable effectiveness, theological analysis has explored the "I-Thou" relationship. The task ahead is to examine the relationship of the one to the many.

2. *The Data and the Method.* A second polarity may be seen in this oft-heard formulation of the relationship between religion and sociology: religion provides the substance or the data and sociology the method for

analysis of the data. At first glance this seems reasonable. But note what is implied. This formulation raises at least two sets of questions. First, does it not conceive of sociology as a tool, whereas, in fact, sociology is always more than a tool and serves more than a mere instrumental function?

Second, does this view not presuppose that religion is deficient at the point of methodology, that it lacks a methodology to comprehend its social significance? Can religion be reduced to the passive status of merely providing data? Indeed, this query raises a challenge to the theologian to clarify his methodology. To raise this question may be forcing upon theology a particular mode of analysis from which theology might prefer to remain aloof. But this does not vitiate the salutary character of the methodological question.

In contemporary sociology there is strong support for the primacy of method. Many would argue that sociology vindicates itself by its utilitarian function—that is, sociology cannot be said to be true or false, but good or bad from the standpoint of its utility. Thus sociology receives its justification by works, whereas theology finds its justification by faith. So dominant is the utilitarian focus these days that a strong current of opinion maintains that a method devised and verified is more important than a particular sociological finding or set of findings. Hence the instrument becomes more important than the end to which it is employed. One is reminded of T. H. Marshall's comment that the famous dictum, "Give us the tools and we will finish the job" has taken on a new form: "Give me a job, and I will spend the rest of my life polishing the tools."

At present, however, it is safe to say that the sociology of religion does not err on the side of overemphasizing methodology. At least in part, the present impasse stems from the lack of adequate methodological tools, on the one hand, and inadequate theoretical construction, on the other. Significant advance must await the result of the creative interplay between theoretical orientation and methodological sophistication.

3. *The Empirical and the Normative.* Another polarity to depict the relationship between religion and sociology goes as follows: sociology is empirical, whereas religion is normative. Sociology deals with the "is" and religion with the "ought." Sociology is observational and descriptive, whereas theology is confessional.

While Liston Pope and others propound this polarity, it is in certain respects a misleading one. For sociology, if it is indeed to have utility value, must be more than empirical; it must also be evaluative, diagnostic, and even prescriptive. It must interpret if it seeks and wishes to understand

social reality. As for theology, if it merely deals with the "ought" it soon loses touch with existential reality and becomes an empty and formal system of abstractions. A theology whose only concern is the "ought" or a sociology confined to the "is" are both truncated.

Advancement in the sociology of religion will not come with the "is" and the "ought" peering at each other from opposite sides of the fence. Much of the shortcoming of present-day sociology of religion resides in its inability to probe sociologically the inner meaning and depths of the phenomena it seeks to study. Such inability in no small measure springs from the false dichotomy between empirical and normative. One of the problems which future students must face is how to study religion without undue concentration on its external structures to the neglect of the intimate, internal facets which give religion its ultimate meaning.

V

So far we have dealt with the newly arrived status of sociology and have raised the question of like progress in the sociology of religion. Although noting certain positive signs, we were inclined to cast doubt on any significant advance and suggested that the sociology of religion lives largely on the achievements of former generations. Then we selected four issues for discussion: the legitimacy of the discipline, its traditional concern with primitive religion, its three camps of adherents, and various polarities involved in its quest for self-definition.

Now to bring our discussion to a constructive conclusion: we may say that religion is at least social, whatever else it may be. As such, one can raise sociological questions and apply sociological concepts to study religion. These concepts should be applicable and testable in the religious realm, if they are adequate for sociology in general. To do this is not to exhaust the nature of religion—even as theology itself fails in this regard.

The sociology of religion illumines particular ranges of religious and social reality. It does not encompass the totality of religion. As a leading sociologist, Talcott Parsons, acknowledges, religion consists of more than what is available for scientific treatment. Religion is not epiphenomenal; it is neither a passing fancy nor something linked to a prescientific world view. Religion is an integral aspect of culture and performs important functions for the maintenance of culture.

Since religion necessarily has a socio-cultural existence, a social context, it is susceptible to sociological scrutiny. Hence the possibility of a sociology of religion. Its legitimacy inheres in its capacity to interpret

the social dimensions of religion in a meaningful way. The broadest definition of its field of concern: the point of contact, the mutual interaction and interplay of religion and society, including the impact of society on religious institutions and vice versa.

With this broad definition in mind, what the field needs is not additional "grand theory," but a conscientious dedication to the next steps, which entail the careful cultivation of building blocks before the house of knowledge of the sociology of religion can be built. The more limited task confronting the sociology of religion in the years just ahead is to draw upon existing sociological concepts and general sociological knowledge for interpretations of specific patterns of religious behavior and religious institutions. In such an assessment, not only will there be application of sociological theory, but also, one might expect some revisions and new theories to be added to the fund of sociological knowledge. One illustration of this task might be drawn from the study of sectarianism. Sociologists have developed a considerable body of knowledge on this subject. Yet their theories have been developed in the social setting of either the European state-church or the American pattern of established denominations. Perhaps new theories of sectarianism may be derived from a study of the problem in the social setting of the younger churches, where sectarian groups take on a different character. In any case, a comparative study of the organizational life and ideology of sectarian groups at home and abroad is in order, if the existing theory is to be tested and refined.

The opportunities for study and research in the still virgin territory of the sociology of religion are rich and complex. Exciting prospects are sure to await those who would pursue and cultivate this challenging field of scholarship.

The Culturally Conditioned Christian

DONALD WALHOUT

IS THE CASE for Christianity nullified by the fact that the person expounding it can be seen to have adopted the religion which happens to be dominant in his particular culture? In other words, does the cultural conditioning of a person into Christianity, as the main religion in his cultural background, destroy any objective rational validity which he might claim for his acceptance of it?

The type of experience which gives rise to this question is familiar to many people, certainly to all sensitive people. Sooner or later, a thinking Christian is bound to recognize, or be reminded, that he, like millions of other human beings in all times and places, has taken over the religion which has become ascendant in his particular society or group. He is reminded that if he were brought up in China he would probably be a Confucian; if in India, a Hindu; if in Egypt, a Muslim; and so on. Defend Christianity as he may and argue for its unique status, justify his choice by whatever reasons he will, he nevertheless appears, from the point of view of the non-Christian humanistic critic, let us say, to be acting exactly like the millions of people in other societies who defend the religion of their culture with equal vigor. The variations are different, but the theme of cultural influence is the same. If the Christian had been thoroughly reared in some other culture, chances are he would be choosing and expounding with corresponding acuteness the religion of that culture.

For the humanistic interpreter this survey of cultural influence is enough to remove any semblance of rational weight or objective validity from claims made for the truth and uniqueness of Christianity. He may grant that it is psychologically and sociologically desirable for a person to accept the religion of his culture; but this is something quite different from assigning any rational validity or truth to the religion, or from giving any reason why the religion should be accepted by those who are not inclined to do so. His case seems to be strengthened by the real possibility, from a practical point of view, of a person actually being brought up in one out

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of several alternative societies. That is, it is a practical possibility for a child, through the choice of his parents or some other agency, to be physically transported to China or India or Egypt or some other country and to be reared in the country chosen. This means there is a practical possibility for the child to be conditioned into becoming an ardent advocate of any one of several of the world's faiths. Metaphysical considerations aside as to whether the person would be the same person, etc., this practical possibility seems to lend concrete support to the humanistic contention.

There are two ways in which Christians have commonly sought to reply. One is to dispute the alleged facts of conditioning, and the other is to admit the facts but deny the interpretation placed upon them.

In disputing the alleged facts of cultural conditioning, two main tactics are usually employed. The first of these tactics is to try to show that the facts have been only half presented and thus to turn the tables on the humanist. That is, if the Christian has been culturally conditioned, the argument runs, so has the humanist. Our culture is by no means monolithic, and if one declares that people adopt Christianity because of their upbringing, one must also say that people adopt humanism because of their upbringing. What is true of the goose is true of the gander. The classic illustration of this rebuttal, in my opinion, is the quip of Archbishop Temple to a student who accused him of believing as he did only because of the way he was brought up. Temple's reply was that, on similar logic, the only reason why the student believed that Temple believed as he did because of the way he was brought up was because of the way the student himself was brought up. William James was also fond of pointing out that if a theist's position is the outcome of a certain neural composition of his brain, the atheist's position must be treated in the same way, as merely the result of a different neural composition. If the one case is destroyed by the fact of conditioning, so is the other. Thus the humanist's position is held to be self-refuting.

The difficulty in this reply, although it is an effective rebuttal as far as it goes, is that it is largely negative in content. An attack against another position, however valid the criticism, does not establish one's own. Theism is not vindicated by showing that atheism is in the same boat with it. The charge against the case for Christianity is not removed by showing that the same charge can be leveled against the case for humanism. Further, if the positive inference is drawn that factors of cultural conditioning are irrelevant to the question of validity, then humanism as well as Christianity is cleared of the destructive allegation.

Furthermore, the humanist may deny that his position and that of the Christian are in the same category. Any religion, he may claim, is by its very nature particularized and therefore manifests itself in particularized historical expressions. The various religions are very closely identified with particular cultures. Humanism, on the other hand, not being an organized religion, derives not from a particular culture but from a broad and natural human attitude which is present to some degree in all cultures. In choosing humanism, therefore, one is not submitting to the religious conditioning in his own culture but is transcending one's culture as far as one can by embracing that which is universal. The two cases are not the same.

The other tactic which is usually employed to refute the alleged facts of conditioning is to try to show, not that the facts have been only half told, but that they have been exaggerated. Everyone is culturally conditioned to some extent, the argument runs, but it is a gross exaggeration to use this as an adequate explanation of human choices. People are moved by rational decisions as well as by cultural conditioning. The fact that we can point out some people who have been brought up in Christianity but who have become humanists, and other people who have been reared in a humanistic background but who have turned to Christianity, is an effective counter-argument against the factual claim of cultural determination. In modern times especially, with greater means of knowledge and more communication with other points of view, including those of other cultures, personal autonomy must be assigned more weight in the determination of choices. The exaggeration of the facts is not only wrong in itself, the argument continues, but is even more misleading when it is used as the basis for denying objective validity to the Christian claim. Even if there is some cultural conditioning, the question of validity for any view is quite a different matter, and the latter cannot be inferred from the former. Cultural conditioning is one thing; truth or falsity is another.

To this tactic the humanist is likely to reply very much in kind. To be sure, he may assent, there is more information available today about other points of view, and there is more mixing of cultures. Accordingly there are perhaps more individuals who do switch their allegiance from the outlook in which they were brought up. But on the whole the overwhelming majority of people still adopt the religion of their particular culture. The plain empirical facts are that Christian countries do produce more Christians than other countries, Muslim countries more Muslims, India more Hindus, China more Confucians. Despite the alleged factor of rational decision, most people still accept the religion of their own

culture. The individual deviants are not enough to upset the general thesis. When all is said and done, people do generally come up with the religion which their culture has conditioned them for.

Moreover, many of the seeming individualists can be seen as minor variants within the same cultural pattern. For example, a Christian who becomes a Jew or a Jew who becomes a Christian is not, from a cultural or even a religious standpoint, making as great a switch as might appear at first. And as for the question of validity, the humanist may readily acknowledge the distinction between the fact of cultural conditioning in religion and the question of the truth of religion. But he may insist that apart from some access to the determination of validity, apart from some vantage point which can adjudicate the various claims of validity, the distinction becomes a purely formal one and evaporates into irrelevance. And it is precisely this needed vantage point, he argues, which is impossible for the Christian because of his cultural conditioning. From a practical point of view, therefore, the facts of cultural conditioning are tantamount to a judgment on validity; they are sufficient to offset any claim to objective validity by the Christian. So the humanist may reason, and come round to his original charge.

The second principal way of meeting the charge that cultural conditioning removes any validity from the affirmation of Christianity is not by denying the alleged facts at all but by disputing the interpretation which is placed upon the facts. The aim here is not to discount the influence of cultural conditioning but to ask what the fact of cultural conditioning proves. Taking this approach may seem to some to be a premature surrender on the facts. There is a tendency among some theologians—not to mention rationalistic philosophers as well—to think that the only way their position can be vindicated is by showing that they stand, independent and free, beyond the pale of cultural conditioning, so that their conclusions are unsullied by the taints coming from anything but pure thought. But the marked differences among such reasoners themselves, as well as the data of cultural anthropologists, though distorted by extremists, have brought more caution into the claims of independence from cultural influence.

To my mind, without going further into the plausible counter-replies that can be made to the humanist's factual case, as long as the dispute remains lodged on this factual plane the humanist has a strong case to make. The most effective counter-reply is to question the interpretation given to the facts, namely, that they remove all objective validity from any particular religious truth claim. Grant, then, that whatever the status

of the humanist's own conditioning may be, the Christian has adopted the religion which is dominant in his culture. The question now is how this should be interpreted.

In thus challenging the humanist interpretation, the most meaningful approach is, I believe, through a theology of history which absorbs the indicated facts and gives a more far-reaching interpretation of culture. Apart from this the humanist's case is a formidable one.

Now there is a somewhat arrogant theology of history which is in frequent circulation but which falls prey to the humanist's orbit of explanation. It asserts that God directly chose Christianity to be the only religion on earth containing truth, and that he chose Western culture as the main vehicle for the development of his religion. Therefore the Christian, being brought up in the Christian West, can speak with objective validity because he is in a sense speaking for God himself, the source of truth, whereas all other religions and cultures are slaves to the relativities of time and location. The cultural conditioning of the Christian, according to this conception, far from being a barrier to objective validity, is the very means of inaugurating him into truth itself.

This theology falls into the humanist orbit of explanation, it seems to me, because it fits squarely into the pattern of self-centered schemes which the anthropologist finds in so many cultures. If there is no significant variation in the hosts of provincial claims to absolutism, there seems little to choose from, and the humanist will point out analogous conditioning in all cases. If all say the same thing, a common explanation seems to be rendered more plausible. Of course it is perfectly conceivable that just one of the absolute claims which deny any truth to any other view is the only absolutely right one and all the others are absolutely wrong. But take what test of truth you will, such a conception does not appeal, upon thoughtful reflection, and even though they may be wrong, to many thinking and feeling persons, especially those considered least bound by their own culture. Even fewer would, I suspect, make such an absolute claim for themselves personally. The net result is that the humanistic outlook is strengthened rather than weakened by this sort of thinking.

An adequate theology of history must, in my view, give due weight to three factors: first, it must show meaning and purpose in the cultural particularization which Christianity has historically manifested; second, it must find corresponding meaning and purpose in the non-Christian religions and cultures; third, it must do justice to personal autonomy in decision-making within culture.

First, then, this theology must see the origin and development of Christianity, and of the culture in which it appears, as grounded not in natural forces alone but in divine purpose. The cultural particularization of Christianity, and the ensuing relativity of conditioning of individuals, must be seen as an aspect of overarching, divinely purposed pattern. Christians can then say not only that they are adopting the religion of their culture but that they are being chosen by it—or rather by the divine purposer informing it. The cultural conditioning thus relates one not just to irrational social influences but to a personal Will who is the real ground of worth and truth. Claims to objective validity are not made independently of cultural conditioning but through it. No doubt the full scope of divine purpose is unfathomable; but, from the human side, the Jews knew long ago that a people is not chosen for favors but for hardships, responsibilities, and historical revelation.

Second, this theology must see meaning and purpose in other religions and cultures. This ought to be a simple deduction from the belief in monotheism. That is, if there is only one real God, then he must be the real God of every religion and culture, whatever distortions and idols may appear in any one. Christians differ in their judgments regarding the relation between Christianity and other religions. But, as was said before, one thing will not do, and that is to give one explanation of cultural conditioning for Western Christians and a totally different explanation for all other religions and cultures. The one God who has a role for Christianity and its culture in his divine purpose must also be viewed as having roles for other religions and their cultures in his divine purpose.

Third, a theology which insists upon the divine conditioning of the individual to such an extent that he is rendered an automaton is a weak replacement for the humanistic explanation. A view which does not allow that we are in some sense freely choosing, as well as being conditioned for, our beliefs, has merely juggled the factors of conditioning without effectively meeting the charge of complete relativity and subjectivity. In short, both conditioning and personal choice must be accounted for. From this vantage point I think more depth can also be seen in the attempt to point out, on the humanist's own factual ground, the self-refuting character of any extreme position on conditioning.

To set forth a theological interpretation of cultural conditioning is not in itself to guarantee the truth of that theology. But it does present an alternative explanation which meets, through incorporation, the humanistic criticism based upon cultural conditioning.

Religion and the Arts

Some Contemporary Experiments in Liturgical Architecture

JAMES F. WHITE

AFTER FIFTEEN YEARS of conflict, the fight for the use of contemporary church architecture can safely be considered won. Bastions of conservatism remain, especially the South, which seems to prefer a version of New England Georgian under the illusion that it is "regional." But recent forays of the contemporary school into North Carolina, Louisiana, and Texas have indicated that even the South is no longer unyielding. New England conservatism has surrendered in such unlikely spots as Boston's Back Bay and Cambridge. This is not to say that imitative buildings are not being built today. Indeed, many are erected each year, but the number built in contemporary style now exceeds them and grows larger each year.

One cannot overlook the *technical* improvements made in church architecture in the past few years. Many important structural problems have received brilliant new solutions, while the prospect for the development of a more plastic free-form architecture is exciting. And the more mundane, but essential, problems of acoustics, lighting, and heating can now be handled very skillfully.

Likewise, the *emotive* potentials of church architecture have been developed to a high level. The subjective response which a building elicits from those entering it has been carefully studied and the wonderful grab-bag of modern technical advances has provided many methods of stimulating the desired feeling. Unusual height, controlled lighting, careful color schemes, all have been exploited to produce certain moods and responses. There is no doubt but that the emotive quality of a building can be of great importance in stimulating (or inhibiting) private devotions, and undoubtedly our churches should function as oratories during the

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long hours between regular public services of worship. Here, then, questions of style are of great importance. In considering the requirements for private devotions, due attention must be paid to the common demand for a "worshipful atmosphere." There should no longer be any doubt that contemporary architecture, in the hands of a skillful architect, possesses these emotive qualities to an unequaled degree.

But the church building has an even more important function than that of being the locale of private worship. Its chief purpose is to provide the setting for common worship by the Body of Christ. It is in this sense that we can speak of *liturgical* architecture. Common worship, sometimes referred to as public or corporate worship, differs from private devotions in character. The emotional factors, frequently so important in private worship, are replaced by a disciplined emotion in which all can share alike. Perhaps one can best illustrate this by comparing the highly emotional and operatic church music of the nineteenth century with the restraint and austerity of medieval plain song. In plain song the individual expression is subordinated to the common worship of the group. Likewise, in common worship those emotive qualities of the church building which produce individual responses are less significant. Even questions of style assume subsidiary importance in liturgical architecture.

Three elements of great significance for liturgical architecture must be noted. Each raises theological questions about relating the design of the building to a concept of worship. First of all, the position of the liturgical centers—pulpit, lectern, holy table or altar, baptismal font, and litany desk—is of greatest importance in expressing a doctrine of common worship. Is Baptism a private act of dedication or an act of incorporation into the Body of Christ performed in the congregation's midst? Secondly, the design of the liturgical centers is also indicative. Is Communion chiefly the offering of a sacrifice, or primarily the commemoration of an historic event? The location of the congregation is the third important item. Is the role of the congregation passive or are the people actors expressing a common experience? All of these matters, easily analyzed by means of a floor plan, are of paramount significance in liturgical architecture.

I

One may well wonder what has been accomplished in recent years in liturgical architecture. The advances made in technical and emotive matters are obvious and need no comment here. But it is well worth inquiring as to what development has occurred in those elements most closely

related to common worship. Without much doubt, the most conspicuous feature has been an unfortunate tendency toward acceptance of an almost standard form. Whereas in past years the various denominations adhered to fairly well-defined liturgical arrangements, today it is frequently impossible to guess the denomination of a new church by simply observing its interior. The arrangement which has become so popular has acquired the name "the divided chancel," a rather meaningless term since the mere existence of a chancel implies a division. The really significant fact about this arrangement is that an extra room has been added to the church, accommodating only those engaged in the service in a special function, specifically preaching, reading the service, or singing. Protestant churches before the adoption of this arrangement tended to be square with the congregation grouped about a platform upon which stood the pulpit. Now Protestant churches generally consist of two rectangles—one for the congregation and the other for the clergy and choir. In addition, the liturgical centers have multiplied. Instead of a single liturgical center composed of a table before the pulpit, the divided chancel boasts at least three liturgical centers—pulpit, lectern, altar, and sometimes a font or baptistry. When Communion is celebrated, three liturgical centers are often employed in a single service.

It is indicative of the popularity of the divided chancel that it appears in new buildings of every architectural style as well as of every denomination. One is apt to find it in Gothic revival, Georgian revival, or in contemporary churches. Indeed, it is apparent that style need not affect liturgical architecture since the identical arrangement appears over and over again in the greatest possible variety of styles.

It is interesting to trace the origin of such a popular arrangement. The divided chancel, as we know it, owes its present popularity to a group of English churchmen who in 1839 organized the Cambridge Camden Society, a name later changed to the Ecclesiological Society. The declared purposes of this group (as of 1846) included "the study of Christian Art and Antiquities, . . . the recognition of correct principles and taste in the erection of new churches; and the restoration of ancient ecclesiastical remains."¹ This would have been a rather innocuous program had not the Ecclesiologists possessed such definite ideas on "correct principles and taste." Strongly influenced by the Romantic Movement, they were convinced that correctness meant a return to the architecture of a holier time than the nineteenth century. Their choice was the early fourteenth century and its

¹ "Seventh Anniversary Meeting," *Ecclesiologist*, V (1846), 256.

Decorated phase of Gothic architecture. Decorated churches were noted for their deep chancels, and accordingly the Ecclesiologists ruled: "Every church of whatever kind, size, or shape, should have a distinct Chancel at least *one-third* of the length of the Nave."² The spacious chancel was to be occupied by the clergy, the nave by the laity, "so exhibiting, what is so wholesome for both to remember, the distinction which must exist between the Clergy and their flocks."³ There can be little mistaking the theological principles of the Ecclesiologists; they were, for the most part, faithful adherents of the ideas enunciated in the contemporary *Tracts for the Times*, though they felt that Pusey and the other Tractarians sadly neglected the esthetic side of Christianity.

Largely through the efforts of the Ecclesiologists, a complete change was made in the appearance of most Anglican churches. In the 1830's few Anglican parishes used the chancel for worship. Frequently boarded off from the church proper, it was often utilized as a school. The services were taken from a three-decker pulpit, conveniently located in the nave, and the rare Communion was celebrated on a table beside, in front of, or behind, the pulpit. Needless to say, few Anglican parishes included chancels in their new buildings, and they were unknown in the free churches. But the extraordinarily vigorous activity of the Ecclesiologists brought fruits which amazed even them. In little more than thirty years, chancels were considered a normal part of Anglican churches, and most Anglicans no longer considered crosses, stone altars, and rood screens as "badges of popery." What is perhaps more amazing, many of the free churches were building "correct" Gothic churches with the neo-medieval floor plan of separate and distinct naves and chancels. The *Ecclesiologist* was not pleased with this appropriation of its principles by free churchmen; it considered their new churches as "mere unreal pageantry, a proof of deadness of heart, and obtuseness of sense, a hollow and sickening thing, like the laughter of idiotcy, or a drunken revel in a charnel-house."⁴

But whatever the *Ecclesiologist* thought, the divided chancel and all its appurtenances were adopted by Anglican and free churchman alike. In America, the New York Ecclesiological Society preached identical principles for a few years in the 1850's and the crusade was continued by John Henry Hopkins. Virtually the same concepts were vigorously propagated in this country for half a century by Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942).

² Editor's note, *Ecclesiologist*, I (1842), 45.

³ "On Sedilia and Altar Chairs," *Ecclesiologist*, II (1842), 91.

⁴ "The New Independent Meeting-House at Manchester," *Ecclesiologist*, VII (1847), 171.

It would be difficult to say which was more influential, Cram's numerous writings on church architecture, or the impressive number of buildings which he designed, including the West Point Chapel, St. Thomas' in New York City, or parts of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. Though Cram had scruples about building for denominations which he considered Protestant (he was a devout Anglo-Catholic), he did so a number of times. His rather scholarly versions of Gothic churches were widely imitated. What Cram left undone was accomplished by men such as Elbert Conover, director of the Bureau of Architecture, The Methodist Episcopal Church. Conover worked for years to popularize the Gothic revival church, complete with full chancel. Although the style itself has now virtually passed away, the chancel has remained. In recent years there has been a spate of books on the chancel, treating it as an indispensable part of the Protestant church building. The victory of the neo-medieval church arrangement, introduced and advocated by the Ecclesiological Society, has been complete. Not only Anglicans, but all Protestant denominations now use it constantly.

II

The first years after World War II saw a few timid experiments in liturgical architecture. After all, few of those denominations employing the divided chancel share the theological presuppositions of the originators. Indeed, it is highly doubtful if any Anglican scholars now regard the liturgical practices of the fourteenth century as ideal. And so, here and there, a few churches have conducted experiments in liturgical architecture, seeking to find arrangements which more precisely reflect their concepts of common worship. The most significant of the experiments have been based on careful studies of liturgical theology and a review of the liturgical architecture of the past.

Perhaps the most popular of these experiments has involved the simple act of moving the altar away from the wall and of celebrating Communion from behind it. Of course, the practice of having free-standing communion tables has never vanished among some denominations. But even the weight of Calvin's example had not sufficed to prevent many Presbyterians from building altars abutting on the east wall of the chancel. Today a number of churches have returned to the free-standing altar, although still within the chancel. It would seem that by this time almost every Episcopalian clergyman who can pry his altar loose has experimented with celebrating from behind it. Seabury Press has published a booklet dealing with this

practice.⁶ The obvious advantage is that it gives the congregation a better view of the actions at the altar. It also recovers some of the dramatic aspects of the sacrament seen as a re-enactment of the Last Supper, with some features of the intimacy of that meal.

A second moderate experiment, frequently seen today in new Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic churches, is that of returning the communion rail so as to enclose the altar on three sides, or even on four. The possible forms which this may take are numerous. In the Chapelwood Methodist Church, Houston, Texas, the rails form three sides of a rectangle around the table, the wall forming the fourth side. Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Minneapolis has rails drawn out into a large circle, filling the chancel in front of the altar. Above the center of the circular rails is a suspended cross. Another Lutheran church in Minneapolis, the Church of the Good Shepherd, has the rails arranged so as to form three sides of a hexagon around the altar. The Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter in Tallahassee, Florida, has rails on all four sides of a free-standing altar. In general, the purpose of this variety of experimentation seems to be that of bringing the communicants closer together around the holy table so that there is a greater sense of common action. (Let us hope that it is not done merely to get the service through sooner.) The advantages of a close sense of unity among the communicants in partaking of the sacrament are obvious.

Most of the experiments mentioned thus far are in churches with a fairly well-defined chancel area. The basic floor plan is still the neo-medieval double rectangle of nave and chancel. Despite the modifications made, the pattern remains that of primary and secondary liturgical centers in space distinct from the main body of the church and usually elevated several steps above it. However, in the last decade several more radical experiments have been made. Church architecture develops by a process of mutation rather than a single stream of progress. Of the numerous experiments made in each generation, only a small number survive to enrich the species. One can only guess which they are, but I would like to describe and comment on four recent buildings, the products of careful theological and historical investigation, which time may prove to have been the progenitors of future types of churches. Two of these buildings are Episcopalian, one is Presbyterian, and another is Lutheran. Although all are in contemporary idiom, for our present purposes the style is irrelevant.

⁶ Edited by Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., et al. *Before The Holy Table: A Guide To The Celebration of The Holy Eucharist, Facing The People; According to the Book of Common Prayer*, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1956.

1. The Episcopal Church of Saint Clement in Alexandria, Virginia, is a building of historic significance. Built in 1949, the church almost certainly represents the first complete break from the neo-medieval plan which has characterized Episcopal churches in this country for so long. Much of the credit should go to the Very Reverend Darby Betts who, as the first rector of the parish, provided many of the basic ideas for the church. Joseph Saunders was the architect. Somewhat debatable are the emotive factors employed here. This building has no windows, lighting being by a number of spotlights in the ceiling. The intention, evidently, was that of giving a sense of vastness by avoiding clearly defined space. In addition, there is no suggestion of contact with the outside world.

Much more significant is the liturgical arrangement of the interior. The building is in the shape of a Greek cross. One enters at the base of one arm, beneath a balcony for the choir. In the center of the building is a free-standing altar, facing the entrance and surrounded on four sides by the communion rail. A large wooden cross is suspended directly over the altar. Between the altar and the entrance stands the baptismal font. Behind the altar is the pulpit with the lectern directly in front of it, though on a lower level. To the right and left of the altar are rows of pews, seating four hundred people.

Although the total effect is quite unique, St. Clement's represents several elements once prominent in the Anglican tradition. An extremely useful book, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, was published in 1948, the work of the church historian, G. W. O. Addleshaw, and the architect, Frederick Etchells.⁶ These writers carefully list the extraordinary variety of experiments conducted by the Anglican reformers of the sixteenth century in overcoming what seemed to them the great disadvantage of the medieval churches which they had inherited. The chief problem was that the long chancels made it difficult for the laity to participate in the services in any role but that of spectators. The favorite solutions often involved placing "God's board" in a "convenient" place in the nave before the congregation, or else moving the communicants into the chancel itself at the Invitation ("Draw near . . ."). A characteristic feature of Anglican churches by the eighteenth century was the three-decker pulpit which provided a unified liturgical center from which the entire service could be taken except on the rare occasion of Holy Communion.

St. Clement's places the altar in the midst of the congregation with the strong suggestion that the worshipers are gathered about a table as a

⁶ London, Faber and Faber, 1948.

family. Except for the small space within the communion rail, there is no suggestion of any area being a clerical prerogative as in churches with a chancel. The prayers, lessons and sermons are read or preached from a single place, the pulpit-lectern. All the liturgical centers—font, altar, and pulpit-lectern—are close together and located in the midst of the congregation. The designers have declared their intention as that of building specifically for Prayer Book worship. (Of course, the Ecclesiologists claimed the same thing when they developed the neo-medieval floor plan, but ideas of what constitutes Prayer Book worship have changed considerably in the last hundred years.) It is worth noting that St. Clement's was anticipated by a remarkably similar Roman Catholic church, St. Mark's, Burlington, Vermont. Although not employing the same emotive techniques, St. Mark's also has a Greek-cross plan with the altar in the center, the congregation on three sides, and choir stalls and sacristy on the fourth.

2. Another significant experiment was conducted in 1957 when Episcopalians built the Chapel of St. James the Fisherman at Wellfleet, Massachusetts (on Cape Cod). St. James' is a square wood structure designed by Olav Hammarstrom. In this instance, too, the altar stands at the center of the building, surrounded by an octagonal rail. Pews fill the quadrants of the building, running perpendicular to the diagonals. Two aisles bisect the pews, crossing at the altar. The pulpit stands in one aisle and opposite it, beyond the altar, stands the font. Although the building seats 320 people, no one is more than six rows from the altar. The clergy sit with their families, as sometimes happened in eighteenth-century churches. The choir, too, is placed in the midst of the congregation. Laymen read the lessons and bring the bread, wine, and alms to the altar. An attempt has been made to minimize distinctions between clergy and laity in the common work of the people of God, Christian worship. The general atmosphere is one of informality. One could mention several new Roman Catholic churches in which the congregation also surrounds the altar, though in a circular fashion. The Church of the Blessed Sacrament in Holyoke, Massachusetts, arranges the congregation in eight rows of pews around a central altar; and the Marian College Chapel, Poughkeepsie, New York, does the same thing, though on a smaller scale.

3. A Presbyterian church of great interest is Bethany in Portland, Oregon, designed by architects John F. Jensen and Louis C. Gilham. The floor plan here is a hexagon, elongated on two parallel sides, the entrance being at the junction of two short sides. The Lord's table is located in the center of the building. Pews surround it on three sides, somewhat in

the form of the letter "U." The open end of the "U" is occupied by the pulpit, directly in front of which is located the lectern. The prominence of the pulpit is enhanced by a large wooden cross supported above it on a projecting organ chamber. The interior of the "U" is thus occupied, in succession, by table, lectern, and pulpit. The choir and organ console are situated in a gallery over the entrance.

The plan of the building makes both the table and the pulpit central features. Though the church seats 250 people, none are more than twenty feet from the table. The most remarkable feature of the arrangement, the table placed lengthwise (parallel to the long sides of the building), is not as novel as it may seem. George Hay has shown that the practice of placing the table so that it ran lengthwise down an aisle was common at one time in Scottish churches.⁷ In the seventeenth century, Anglicans and Presbyterians often experimented with this position (known as table-wise) rather than the conventional altar-wise position. In parts of the Netherlands temporary tables are still erected in the aisles for Communion. Bethany really represents a very old idea in a contemporary setting. The arrangement calls attention to the Word, proclaimed both through preaching and sacrament as Calvin desired.

4. Few new churches present a more unusual appearance than St. John's Lutheran Church in Midland, Michigan. Alden B. Dow, who designed several other outstanding churches in the same city, placed the altar at the center of an octagonal nave in St. John's. Indeed, the entire building radiates from the altar with meeting rooms (used on weekdays by a parochial school), library, or a lounge projecting from each of the eight sides of the nave. As a result, the altar is at the center of all the church's varied activities. A cross, resting upon the octagonal altar, is duplicated on the exterior atop a small spire directly above the altar. Inside the church, the altar is surrounded on seven sides by the congregation, seated seven rows deep. The eighth side is occupied by the pulpit, organ console, and choir. Eight small tables are placed around the altar, evidently for the use of communicants. A unique arrangement of clerestory windows concentrates light upon the altar, giving it a burst of light such as one finds in the baroque churches built by German Lutherans. Lighting, color, and converging lines have been used to focus the worshiper's attention upon the dominant liturgical center, the altar. Another new Lutheran church, St. Peter's in Edina, Minnesota, employs a similar arrangement, though the basic structure of the building is quite different.

⁷ *The Architecture of Scottish Post-Reformation Churches, 1560-1843*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957.

III

It will be noticed that all four of these experiments described above have a number of features in common. First of all, the altar or table is placed in the center of the congregation. Instead of the altar being isolated from the congregation by the length of the chancel, it is placed in the midst of the worshipers. A few less radical experiments have simply eliminated the chancel and placed the altar in the center of the crossing with the congregation seated in transepts on either side and in the nave before the altar. The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, in Baltimore, Maryland, is perhaps the best example of this.

It is possible that subsequent generations will feel the table has been somewhat vulgarized by being placed in these positions where it is so completely exposed. As the withdrawn focal point of the chancel, the altar has a certain mystery and majesty. Perhaps we are becoming too familiar with holy things. But this seems unlikely. The sense of being gathered about the Lord's table in a common act of worship is probably a gain outweighing any disadvantages. The central altar or table recovers old ideas of the liturgy as the common work of the people of God. No newcomer to Protestantism, it was simply forgotten during the last century. Most likely we will see many more central altars. When used for good theological reasons, there is much to be said for them. Certainly they should be rejected rather than be employed for esthetic reasons (which seems rather unlikely) or for the sake of merely sociable togetherness.

The second common feature of these buildings is the reduction in the number of liturgical centers. Instead of pulpit, lectern, altar, and font, placed at the extremities of a chancel, an effort has been made to group these centers together and to simplify them as much as possible. The consequence has been that of making the various acts of the service appear more directly related to each other. After all, preaching and the sacraments show forth the same event. Calvin took most of the service from behind the table, using the pulpit for preaching. This is perhaps the ultimate possible reduction of liturgical centers. With a central table it is rather difficult to read prayers without turning one's back to a portion of the congregation. But perhaps this problem will be solved and then the lectern (reintroduced during the nineteenth century) can be eliminated along with the chancel.

Finally, it is obvious that the buildings mentioned, including the few Roman Catholic examples, have much in common, perhaps a by-product

of the Ecumenical Movement. It is a truism that the best Protestant and Catholic liturgical thought tends to coalesce today. Certainly this seems true of their architecture. However, I believe there is one exception. In several of the Protestant churches cited a conscious effort has been made to minimize distinctions between the clergy and congregation. The clergy in Protestantism often are considered as performing an office simply as representatives of the congregation. As a result some of these new churches are non-hierarchical in character. Although contemporary Roman Catholic writers evince a great desire to have the congregation more intimately involved in the Mass, all insist on a definite hierarchical distinction between those in holy orders and the laity. A clear-cut distinction between the work of the clergy and the work of the people remains. It is not simply a question of office but of order. The hierarchical principle remains despite the other changes which have taken place.

Certainly none of these experiments are final. It is to be hoped that they will inspire others to hazard the danger of trying new experiments. If grounded solidly on good theological principles and historical research the risk is minimal. Purely subjective choices and efforts at excessive emotive effects will probably go astray. Before the present standardization of arrangements, Protestants tried a great variety of experiments. In the eighteenth-century Episcopal churches still standing in this country, at least seven distinct liturgical types may be distinguished. Some of these experiments succeeded, others failed and were forgotten. But when little is risked, little is gained.

Book Reviews and Notices

Jesus of Nazareth. By GÜNTHER BORNKAMM. Trans. by Irene and Fraser McLuskey with James M. Robinson. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960. 239 pp. \$4.00.

Since Christianity arises from a historical revelation, it substantially depends upon the constant inquiry into the historical origin of the Christian message. It is on this basis that the laborious and often painful "quest of the historical Jesus" finds justification. Unfortunately, in the face of the failure to reconstruct the authentic life of Jesus, many have set their minds to rest with the assurance that the only thing which matters is the "Jesus of faith" as he is present in the doctrine and life of the church. Others, in a less inspiring manner and with fundamentalist solemnity, try to prove that Christian faith is identical with an uncritical acceptance of the Gospels as "historical facts."

Professor Günther Bornkamm of Heidelberg, one of the ablest German New Testament interpreters, hopefully leads us beyond the stalemate of such positions in his *Jesus of Nazareth*. Neither insistence upon objective facts nor theological satisfaction with the witness of the church are solutions to the problem of the historical Jesus. The Gospels of the New Testament "unite to a remarkable degree both record of Jesus and witness to him" (p. 14). Historical truth is to be found precisely in this "inter-connection and inter-penetration" of historical record with the witness of faith (p. 21). It is the task of the critical historian to illuminate at each point the life and message of Jesus in the light of the Gospel tradition which arose as "an answer to Jesus' whole person and mission" (p. 21).

It is amazing to see how this fresh methodological approach of Bornkamm results in a mature and challenging scholarly presentation of the "Jesus of history." To be sure, such messianic titles as "Messiah," "Son of God," etc., are part of the Church's interpretation and are not original to Jesus' consciousness or message (see pp. 168-178, 226-231). "The unmistakable otherness" of Jesus, however, becomes so much the more clear in every attempt "to fit his figure into any of the descriptions and categories then prevalent in Judaism" (p. 56). The "directness" of Jesus' teaching, his "astounding sovereignty," his "patent immediacy" are unparalleled elsewhere (pp. 56-61) and characterize Jesus as the one through whom the world has come to an end and a new presence is granted (pp. 62f.).

Jesus constantly is compared with the very best that contemporary Judaism had to offer, in a manner which avoids the familiar degrading clichés. Thus the reader often will find his most sincere religious opinions to be in exact agreement with those of late Judaism. He will find that in Bornkamm's presentation, Jesus' message becomes a vigorous challenge to the foregone conclusions of present-day Christianity; e.g. what is said about the gloom and joylessness of "good" men in their righteousness (pp. 84ff), or about repentance (pp. 82ff), prayer (p. 135) and "reward" (pp. 140f). Here and elsewhere Bornkamm points out the "distance" of our concepts from those of Jesus precisely in those matters which seem so well understood in our religious thought, e.g. "faith" (pp. 129ff)—a distance which is not only a matter of the time that has elapsed since the days of Jesus, but is primarily a matter of the uniqueness of the historical Jesus.

Throughout the book it is clear that this unmistakable uniqueness of Jesus is not

derived from any supernatural quality of his person, but arises exclusively from his message of the coming Kingdom of God. Jesus' authority is, therefore, obscured rather than revealed by an uncritical acceptance of the Gospel tradition. This is particularly forceful in Bornkamm's description of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and his death. By using only the most reliable material, Bornkamm is able to elucidate the unique unity of Jesus' message and his way to the cross.

Special attention also must be called to Bornkamm's interpretation of the Parables and of the Sermon on the Mount (pp. 69ff, 100ff and *passim*). Both employ the best available investigations of these subjects—some of them done by Bornkamm himself in earlier publications—and are masterpieces of New Testament exegesis. It should also be mentioned that this book, though indispensable for the theologian, was written for the layman. That many nontheologians have bought and read the book with great reward is clear from the fact that the German original has appeared in three editions since it first was published in 1956. The quality of the English translation is assured by the fact that it was made under the supervision of James M. Robinson, a leading younger New Testament scholar of this country.

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The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. By JOHN D. GODSEY. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960. 299 pp. \$6.00.

"The life and work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer is finished, but his influence on the Christian church is steadily extending around the world. What is it about his thought that commands attention and speaks to people in a way that is almost uncanny? Why is it that his name is mentioned in the same breath with such theological giants as Barth and Bultmann and Tillich?" (p. 279).

There can be no question about the soundness of this estimate of the influence and stature of Bonhoeffer nor of the need for definitive work on the theology of the young martyr of the Confessional Church. But who is John D. Godsey and does he measure up to so formidable a task? The reader's fears are soon allayed when he discovers that this book is a doctoral dissertation approved by the theological faculty of the University of Basel, with Karl Barth as "referent." It has the coherent structure and the thorough documentation of first-rate theological scholarship. Yet it is written with such clarity and verve that it is as exciting as the life of the man with whom it deals.

The author appears to be precisely the type of man best fitted to penetrate into the thought and to catch the spirit of Bonhoeffer. A graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Dr. Godsey began his study of theology only after service in the army and experience in industry. His background thus equips him to appreciate Bonhoeffer's "worldly" Christianity which shuns principles and systems and requires direct involvement and concrete decisions in the context of contemporary life. Dr. Godsey is a Methodist minister and assistant professor of systematic theology at Drew.

The book consists of three expository chapters and one presenting a summary and general evaluation. The exposition is based on Bonhoeffer's writings during three distinct periods of his life. First is the brilliant student who at the age of twenty-five attains a teaching position on the theological faculty of the University of Berlin. Second is the ecumenical youth secretary who becomes the theological leader of the Confessional Church in its struggle against the Nazified ecclesiastical authority. Third

is the "prisoner for God," pursued and harassed and finally hanged by the Gestapo. Each chapter is provided with a biographical introduction which enables the reader to see how the thought processes are conditioned by the experiences of the man himself.

Particularly revealing is the first chapter with its interpretation of Bonhoeffer's early writings, *Sanctorum Communio* and *Act and Being*. It makes clear that the young theologian was not merely a product of the turbulent events of his day but a gifted thinker prepared to make a vital original contribution to theology. These events compelled him to insist that the church is the "deputy of Christ," not a servant of the state; but he had already learned to define the church as "Christ existing in community" and to demand that the church develop an ontology and sociology of its own on the basis of revelation.

The most important work of the second period is *The Cost of Discipleship* with its polemic against "cheap grace" and its call to sacrificial obedience. Various shorter writings attest to a shift of interest from systematics to a theological interpretation of Scripture. To the final period belong the posthumously edited *Ethics* and *Prisoner for God*. Although the former work is discussed at considerable length, it is unfortunate that the author has found it necessary to pass by the sections on truth-telling, euthanasia, and suicide, for it is here that the vital concreteness of Bonhoeffer's thinking shows to best advantage.

In his evaluation Dr. Godsey points out that while Bonhoeffer has much to say about the nature of discipleship and the nature of the church, the unifying factor in his theology is his steadfast concentration upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. During the first period of his theological development his thought centered on Jesus Christ as the revelational reality of the church, during the second on Jesus Christ as the Lord over the church, and during the third on Jesus Christ as the Lord over the world. The author shows keen insight in grasping the positive elements in Bonhoeffer's "worldly" and "dereligionized" Christianity. He acknowledges that the unavoidable fragmentariness of Bonhoeffer's thinking during the final period of his life left many unanswered questions, but he shows little desire to raise any weighty adverse criticism. It is indeed extremely difficult to be objective in evaluating Bonhoeffer, for no one since Kierkegaard has succeeded so well in compelling his reader to take sides.

With this book Dr. Godsey establishes himself as America's leading authority on Bonhoeffer, provides the standard work on his theology together with a full bibliography of his writings and writings about him, and above all stimulates interest in firsthand investigation of a theological genius who by his word, by his life, and by his death gives gripping expression to the thrust of the Christian faith into the world of today.

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Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann. Selected, translated and introduced by Schubert M. Ogden. New York: Meridian Books, 1960. 320 pp. \$1.45 (pap.).

In two ways, this volume of some of the previously untranslated shorter works of Bultmann, along with the translator's introduction, should serve to eliminate the impasse into which the discussion of demythologization and existential interpreta-

tion seems to have settled the past few years. This impasse is a result of (1) a lack of knowledge and consideration of the total Bultmann *opus*, which means that the manner in which Bultmann is working at the central issue at hand was clouded and distorted; and (2) lack of a really incisive grasp and critique of both the strengths and weaknesses which lie at the heart of Bultmann's methodology and the results he proposes. The issue at hand involves, of course, both the *kerygma* itself and its proclamation in the present (or any) age. Or, to put it another way, it involves the delineation of the only two basic ways man can relate himself to that with which he has to do and how this option can best be offered to man.

The concerns wrestled with by the "early Barth" and reiterated and sharpened by Bultmann were quickly seen to involve possibilities for a radical transforming of traditional modes of preaching and theologizing. The discussion, however, has seemed to bog down with the same objections being offered and the same area being covered again and again. It is this reviewer's belief that the discussion can now enter a new and perhaps really fruitful stage.

The first reason for this, and with specific reference to the volume under consideration, is that now there is no further excuse for continued ignorance or distortion of the unity of purpose in Bultmann's total writings. The many disagreements revolving around Bultmann much too often stem from an inadequate acquaintance with the scope and direction of his work and particularly those writings which came before the original essay (1941) on "The New Testament and Mythology." A glance at what constitutes the twenty selections of this new volume should serve to correct this tendency. Included are two sermons and a meditation, an address, a long review-article, a letter to the editor, and thirteen essays and articles (including invaluable monographs on "The New Approach to the Synoptic Problem," "Paul," "The Concept of Revelation in the New Testament," "Jesus and Paul," as well as the lengthiest discussion of Heidegger that Bultmann has written, and an interesting discussion of the exegete's presuppositions and their relation to his work). Also there is an autobiographical note never before published. These writings range in date from 1917 to 1957. Both the number and the variety of these selections give a picture of where and how Bultmann wants to go and how far he in fact has gotten in his work, which should dispel most of the current misunderstandings.

Nonetheless, critical fuzziness has also been apparent among many of those who have had previous access to the bulk of Bultmann's writings. And here is the area in which this volume assumes what could be decisive significance. Dr. Ogden (who is a professor at the Perkins School of Theology of Southern Methodist University) has written an introduction that is quite startling and provocative in its implications. This introduction plus two of his earlier published articles (mentioned in the bibliography) constitute the first decisive and frontal attack on the problems in Bultmann sensed by many commentators (as far back as Dietrich Bonhoeffer). That Bultmann does not consistently demythologize, that the decision to do so is an either/or one, that to participate fully in this concern means to go much further than Bultmann has done in his existential interpretation, that this involves some radical rethinking in the area of the relations of theology and philosophy and of theology and culture (particularly the art forms), that this raises crucial questions about both our proclaiming and our theologizing: these theses and more imply a self-conscious approach that could result in some really fruitful conversations with ourselves and the world.

Naturally, in a review of this length it has been impossible to spell out and document that which could only be asserted. It is the hope of this reviewer that the

reader may be spurred into examining a most relevant volume, one which can serve as the occasion for a really creative dialogue.

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We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition.

By JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY, S.J. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1960. xiv-336 pp. \$5.00.

An American Dialogue: A Protestant Looks at Catholicism and a Catholic Looks at Protestantism. By ROBERT McAFEE BROWN and GUSTAVE WEIGEL, S.J. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1960. 216 pp. \$2.95.

1. Of these two volumes Father Murray's is particularly significant. The Woodstock College Professor and editor of *Theological Studies* is already an institution in spite of the fact that he has hitherto hidden his light in magazines of very limited circulation. Now he has put his thought into a volume, and has already fallen victim to a variety of reviewers.

Murray is a philosophical realist—in the modern-scholastic sense of the term—and considers the nominalist the “most decadent of all philosophical things.” This is the presupposition which determines the nature of his definition of the American “proposition,” his judgment of contemporary Americans as a people without vision, and his contribution as a Roman Catholic to America's rediscovery of itself. He is deeply concerned about the “city of man.” Conversation is necessary to its order and purpose, and civility “dies with the death of dialogue.” Accepting the pluralism of American society not as the will of God, but as a human condition, he wants to talk with Americans as fellow men.

Murray's case is as enticing and enigmatic as it was when Orestes Brownson proposed it in similar terms after his conversion to Roman Catholicism in the middle of the last century (cf., e.g., *The American Republic*, 1865). Murray is an American citizen, warmly patriotic. When he reaches back to assess the past he finds the achievement of the Founding Fathers outstanding. According to him, they had a forthright “realist epistemology.” The formulation of “these truths,” particularly in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, reflects sound natural law theory. The proposition to which they dedicated America represents the soundest consensus for the life of the “city.” Because of their work, and much to Murray's satisfaction, America has avoided to date the evils of Jacobinism, Communism, Totalitarian Democracy.

But the author finds himself in some embarrassment, since it was Protestantism which provided the predominant religious ethos in the nation's formative period. Catholics were few and not overly influential. To Murray, this is a “paradox.” According to him, Protestant dissent may understand the machinations of power; it cannot comprehend the law. Underscoring the discontent of some Protestants with natural law theory, he maintains that the American truths are “catholic” and that Roman Catholics have always conversed in the ethical and political idiom familiar to the Fathers—to “both the Fathers of the Church and the Fathers of the American Republic.” These truths are valid not because these men formulated them, but because they are analogous to the order and purpose of God's creation. When considering the forces competing for America, he offers the challenge: “. . . it would be for others, not Catholics, to ask themselves whether they still shared the consensus which first

fashioned the American people into a body politic and determined the structure of its fundamental law." On the strength of his argument, St. Thomas Aquinas becomes the "first Whig," Roger Williams and Pius XII are found saying the same thing in substance, and the First Amendment fulfills the objective of a Papal Concordat.

What should be said in response to the author's invitation to argument? Murray's words are an eloquent, timely and forceful reminder to American political scientists of the fact that in the history of political thought in this country, God has been considered the source from whom all power is derived and all law proceeds. But this is not all that needs to be said. Murray calls attention to the history of Greek and Roman political tradition as it was handed down and modified in the Middle Ages. The Roman Catholic Church, of course, has no monopoly on this legacy. Political theory, as the author tacitly admits, has had a Post-Reformation (non-Roman Catholic, non-Lutheran) history, in the constitutional developments both in England and in the United States among Protestants of various types. In his remarks on the Founding Fathers, Murray fails to analyze the creative wedding of classical political theory with American Protestantism. Investigation of this might have broadened his conception of the real nature of the catholicity of the founders of the republic.

For example, Americans, in the "age of contradictions," as someone has dubbed the latter part of the eighteenth century, were neither consistent realists nor nominalists. They combined both approaches to the human situation. While they were "societal" in outlook, they were also concerned about the integrity of the individual in relation to the whole. Again, while they had confidence in the rationality of man (and they were great conversationalists) they realized that man is not disembodied reason without will and passion. They were wise, indeed, in distrusting to some degree even the most enlightened of men.

Murray's special interests would not have escaped the careful scrutiny of the Founding Fathers. Whereas a hundred years ago Brownson's stance was basically defensive, Murray—confident as a result of the increase in Roman Catholic power—is an aggressive and persuasive controversialist. He is very "catholic" when dealing with speculative issues. In applying natural law theory to specifics he is obviously "Roman Catholic," as in the case of church-state relations, censorship, education, birth control, and war. He avoids facing the questions which he raises in the minds of his readers as to why Jacobinism, Communism, and Totalitarian Democracy should be such angry problems for predominantly Roman Catholic countries, and why something like the American "proposition" has not flourished, has not even been formulated, in those lands. He is less than candid when he rationalizes the positions which the Roman Catholic Church has alternately occupied in the world—"privilege or persecution"—as simply the involvement of "Catholic truth" in the "vicissitudes of power." Although Murray seems to reject the contract theory as being as dated as Locke's clothes, he attempts to state the terms on which the Roman Catholic may enter into civil society with other Americans.

2. The respectfully candid essays by Robert M. Brown, of Union Theological Seminary, New York City, and Gustave Weigel, of Woodstock College, are related to the problems raised by Murray. Weigel sees in the Protestant principle of protest, based upon the "God-encounter," an invitation to religious and moral anarchy. Like Murray, he engages in a continuous depreciation of Protestantism's past and present possibilities. Brown approaches his responsibility to Protestant-Catholic dialogue believing that while we may be *separated*, we are still separated *brethren*. To him "beer, ballots, birth control, bingo—and all that" are merely irritants. The basic problem

is theological. While he discusses creative aspects of Roman Catholicism today, he goes to the heart of the matter by raising questions about the dogmatic Infallibility of the Pope and the development of Mariology. Weigel would err greatly if he dismissed these questions as "bugaboo." As the Pope claims too "unambiguously" to have an "irreformable word from the Lord," and as responsible Roman Catholic theologians speak more and more of Mary as "co-redemptrix" with Christ, this adds up for Brown to what seems to be an "irreconcilable cleavage." The Roman Catholic may maintain that nature stands in "no relation of proper causality to grace," to employ Murray's words. But the Protestant believes that the Roman Catholic states the "dispositive and disponible" relationship in such a way as to destroy the intent of *sola gratia*—e.g., in the use of natural law theory and in the dogmas just mentioned.

Here the theological issue joins the civil. Not all Protestants reject natural law theory. Those who are suspicious of its use do not deny that God is responsible for the creation of the order and purpose of the universe. Moreover, they show as much admiration for the work of the Founding Fathers and as much concern for a "right balance between freedom and restraint in society" as do Roman Catholics. Protestants, generally, have been dissatisfied with attempts to claim any human definition as "timeless," to identify absolutely any particular interpretation of natural law with God's designs, to seize and control all life by the force of logic. Natural law theory has been, at times, the refuge of rogues, ecclesiastical as well as civil. Any employment of the theory must be qualified by a more restraining word than any that is offered by Roman Catholic theology. But this is what much of the conversation is all about.

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The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearean Drama. By TOM F. DRIVER. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960. ix-231 pp. \$5.50.

Unlike sculpture or painting or architecture, drama is an art concerned with time. It imitates temporal events, and it does so by means of a temporal re-enactment. Time is thus the chief dimension both of a play's content and of its form. But does not the quality of this dimension differ as between Greek and Shakespearean drama? Does not the theater reflect the assumptions of a particular culture regarding the meaning of time? Professor Driver has undertaken to show how the handling of time in Greek drama reflects the Greek sense of history, whereas the handling of time in Shakespearean drama depends on a Christian sense of history.

Close analysis is required in such an undertaking, and also a considerable background of knowledge in the areas of literature, philosophy, and theology. Driver fortunately brings to his task a training at Union Theological Seminary along with graduate studies at Columbia. He is familiar with Auerbach's analysis of the difference between Homer's style and the Bible's; with Collingwood's perception of an "anti-historical tendency" in Greek historiography; and with Bowman's observations on Hellenism's tendency to "translate time into spatial terms." Thanks to Tillich, Wright, Reinhold Niebuhr, and others, he is also firmly aware of the significance of the cyclical view of time in Greek thought as compared with the apocalyptic view of time in Hebrew thought, and is alert to the Greek tendency to absorb history under nature as compared with the Bible's stress on the primacy of history. Guided by these criteria,

Driver is able to highlight and pinpoint many features of Greek dramatic form which differ from those of Shakespearean dramatic form. His method is to compare a selected pair of plays, one Greek and one Shakespearean, in each of four successive chapters.

He finds in Greek drama a tendency to externalize the action, rather than to explore "the inside of events." Thus in the *Persians* of Aeschylus the experience of living through time is not communicated; rather, time is understood quantitatively as mere duration, and the drama is played "in a very clear-cut world of space, where geography counts for much." Moreover, Aeschylus treats the historical event merely as a point of departure for dramatizing *nemesis*; Xerxes is viewed as an example, one illustration among many, of the operation of nature's unchanging law. In the *Oresteia*, likewise, the "present" becomes a phase in a cycle in which destiny acts, and in which the dramatist's focus is on revealing a reconciliation of cosmic powers. Character is viewed as the product of situation rather than of man's interior decision. In the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles, the action moves backward into a completely decisive past. To Oedipus is ascribed a freedom only to discover this past and be bound by it. To the Greeks fate is stronger than anything, and dramatic action moves toward revealing this truth.

In Shakespearean drama, on the other hand, the focus is on the hero's burden of choice within a context of providential time. By his choices Richard III attempts to operate on a different time schedule from that of the ultimately victorious forces. As Driver notes, there is thus "something like the biblical understanding of a conflict of times." Events grow toward a judgmental action, with acceleration as the apocalyptic moment arrives. In *Macbeth*, too, the hero's subjective time is in counterpoint with providential time. Moreover, Shakespeare makes use of both a fast and slow time scheme, so that the drawn-out pace of chronological time is acknowledged as the very real matrix within which providential time finds expression. We feel the passing of time, and we feel that the future is open. The later events in a Shakespearean play, Driver observes, "often stand in the same relation to early events as do the New Testament events to those of the Old Testament in Christian exegesis"; the spectator is given the sense of a journey into historical revelation, with spurs into the future still jutting out at the end of the play.

Although few of these points will be wholly new to scholars in the field, the synthesis which Driver has made of them is stimulating and important. Particularly valuable is his stress on literary form as itself providing the tell-tale evidence of a playwright's own world-view. Agnostic critics accustomed to reading Shakespeare impressionistically and confidently acclaiming him as of "no religion" will have to reckon with Driver's argument, which he is not alone nowadays in urging.

A serious weakness, however, appears in the chapter on *Hamlet*. Driver seems to forget what he elsewhere (p. 205) affirms, that a Shakespearean tragic hero is "guilty of sin," an offense against the "sovereign who orders nature." Instead, he tries to argue (p. 119) that "Hamlet's revenge is to be regarded as an injunction bearing heavenly approval," by accepting which the hero enters on a "redemptive" vocation. But would Driver wish to say, similarly, of Macbeth that the supernatural soliciting of the weird sisters represents heavenly approval and a redemptive vocation for the hero? Pretty certainly not. He has simply neglected in the case of *Hamlet* to think through consistently the requirements of tragic form.

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Jesus and the Future Life. By WILLIAM STRAWSON. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960. xii-250 pp. \$3.95.

Freedom and Immortality. By IAN T. RAMSEY. London: S.C.M. Press (Alec R. Allenson), 1960. 157 pp. \$3.25.

The authors of these volumes are professionals in the field of teaching. Strawson is Tutor in Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion at Handworth College (a Methodist Seminary) in Birmingham, England. Ramsey is Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion at Oxford. The latter is also author of *Religious Language*, a major publication in the current conversations between religious believers and modern empirical philosophy. I find no record of prior publications by Strawson. Both volumes were originally delivered as Lectures—Strawson's as the Fernley Hartley Lecture for 1959 and Ramsey's as the Forwood Lectures. Both authors are concerned with belief in life after death and both treat the belief from chosen and limited perspectives.

1. Strawson is concerned to determine what Jesus taught about the future life as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. While sympathetic with the growing opinion that the Fourth Gospel is "more trustworthy than used to be supposed," he agrees with many others that the Synoptics "still have the strongest claim to be regarded as authentic historical records" and "as the most primitive tradition of the teaching of Jesus on the subject of the future life." He must deal with historical criticism in its recent and more vigorous forms as represented by Form Criticism, Typologism, and Demythologism. He inclines to the more conservative findings of Dodd, Manson, and Vincent Taylor relative to Form Criticism and of Lampe relative to Typology. Bultmann and other existentialists are held to be too extreme in their positions. Some experts in historical criticism will find much to question in Strawson's position, but this reviewer found much refreshing of memory, much deepening of insight into issues involved, and much homiletical stimulation in his analysis and exegesis of the teachings of Jesus. The teachings considered are those related to the following topics: Heaven, Heavenly Father, Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God, Death, Judgment, The Fate of the Lost, and The Destiny of the Saved. To these are added The Sadducees' Question and The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. These latter are of special significance in that they more clearly describe some of the details of the future life. But Strawson is no literalist. The book is to be recommended to all pastors and seminarians.

2. Ramsey is well aware that "empiricism" is the characteristic emphasis of modern philosophy. Most modern day philosophers would admit empiricism's claim against a purely speculative idealism, apriorism, etc. However, "empirical" has come to mean "observables," "spatio-temporal 'objects'" and "sense experience." In psychology, the important word is "public behavior." The import is that modern empiricism excludes metaphysics and theology. Those who have not yielded totally to the claims of empiricism continue to argue for aspects of experience that transcend "objects." But man is so dominated by his senses that many earnest thinkers in all fields of thought are not persuaded of the reality of the transcendent. If we are to continue to be able to hold our belief in Freedom, Immortality and God as "ontological peculiarities," a more convincing approach is needed.

The author of *Freedom and Immortality* continues the brilliant approach he made in *Religious Language*. The heart of the former is perhaps best expressed in

the following sentence: "Meanwhile we may reflect that the best 'arguments' for free will are the kinds of situation our recent examples have been meant to evoke and recapture." There is not space to cite his examples of situations that cover "more than all language about objects or all scientific language talks about," but if the situations he seeks to evoke by numerous examples are not actually evoked in his readers the arguments based upon them will fail to convince. The examples he cites are clear, concise, and forceful, but there can be no guarantee that "the light will dawn" and "the penny drop." Some will understand clearly the import of his examples and still continue to look for explanations in terms of spatio-temporal objects. They will do this out of consideration for the requirements of scientific method and in order to escape subjectivism. Ramsey understands this possible response, but he thinks the best hope for metaphysics and theology is to continue to cite the examples which require more than objects in casual relation for their understanding.

Here in America those of us who had found light and help in the thought and writings of E. S. Brightman, especially in his posthumous book *Person and Reality*, will welcome an ally who cites, often with humor and always with deep insight into the depths of human experience, so many "examples" of a transcendent reality. Both are radically empirical in that philosophy is bound to consider all of human experience. Ramsey's book is for all who have felt the challenge of modern empiricism to metaphysical and theological beliefs.

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Biblical Faith and Social Ethics. By E. CLINTON GARDNER. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960. xiv-386 pp. \$4.75.

Social ethics is by its nature a conglomerate discipline, involving the use of empirical data from the human sciences, moral judgments made on various bases, and the significance not only of theological ideas but of faith in God for social existence. Professor Clinton Gardner's book will be useful alongside those by Muelder, Rasmussen, Maston, and others, for teaching and for giving insight to the general reader. But it helps at very few points to bring unity, structure, and coherence into the discipline as a whole.

About 200 pages of the book are given to theological ethics. This section, as Gardner acknowledges, is heavily dependent upon the "oral tradition" of H. Richard Niebuhr's ethics, substantiated with reference to books and articles that Niebuhr has written. The very generality of the dependence upon Niebuhr poses a baffling problem to the reader of the book, for it is not clear which aspects are immediately and self-consciously dependent upon the teacher, which are generally inspired by him but developed in Gardner's own way, and which are Gardner's independent of Niebuhr. Certain of Niebuhr's distinctive concepts are used, e.g., "radical monotheism," without specific acknowledgment as to source. Other chapters, e.g., those on biblical ethics, appear to show little influence from Niebuhr. The interpretation of Pauline ethics is mostly dependent upon C. A. A. Scott and C. H. Dodd, and thus clearly dates Gardner's study of the interpretations of this subject. Chapters five through seven, in which Gardner is most heavily dependent upon H. R. Niebuhr, include many insights from others and Gardner's own most carefully defined contribution. Gardner

suggests that the extent of the indebtedness to his teacher is obvious to those acquainted with the teacher. That the indebtedness is heavy is clear, but it is difficult to define precisely the extent. This leaves many nonstudents of Niebuhr in the dark as to what is from the teacher, what is from Gardner, and what is from someone else. To take a teacher's point of view and develop it in new directions is one job (see, e.g., Waldo Beach's chapter in Paul Ramsey, ed., *Faith and Ethics*); to write the teacher's book before he has done it himself is a riskier job, and Gardner has to bear the consequences of this risk.

There are many particular issues, some substantive, and some peripheral, that can be raised about the first part of the book. The weakness of the treatment of Pauline ethics can be pointed out at many points; but I will cite one, the use of Romans 6:1-4 to substantiate the view that Paul "insisted that outward baptism was of no value unless it was the *symbol* of a real *inward experience* of dying to sin and rising with Christ to a new life," p. 69 (*italics mine*). At this and other points in the first chapters, Gardner forecloses difficult points of biblical interpretation too easily. Perhaps this is necessary in a textbook.

The discussion is largely confined to the usual and readily available sources. This leaves out a lot of important material in contemporary discussions. On page 153, Gardner makes one of his very few references to Barth, and in it the implications are erroneous. He leaves out Bonhoeffer for reasons given on page 193; and by implication suggests inaccurately that Paul Lehmann and others have developed their positions independently of Bonhoeffer. On the following pages Brunner is used as the source for the threefold use of the law—curiously ignoring the Reformers and the persisting discussion from them until and after Brunner.

The last part of the book deals with ethics and society. Here one finds a chapter on love and justice embedded between chapters on sex and marriage and on the economic order. One is left to conclude that either the theological ethics of the first part cannot handle the social problems of the second, and thus one has to inject a new set of theological principles—or that the theological principles for dealing with social justice are of a different order than the general theological principles for ethics. It is hard to see, for example, how one can take H. R. Niebuhr seriously and be so favorably disposed toward the weird (from a Protestant point of view) interpretation of sex and marriage given by D. S. Bailey, or so legalistically prescriptive about premarital sexual intercourse. On the latter, there are dubious empirical observations made to substantiate an ethical point. Is it really true that "the practice of premarital intercourse makes it more difficult to maintain fidelity within marriage," or do we merely wish this were true?

The chapter on politics sounds in part much like the lectures of Kenneth Underwood, and one might wish for more documentation on this "oral tradition." Romans 13 and other "state" texts in the New Testament get too simple treatment.

The publication of a textbook such as this obviously has its usefulness. But the development of our discipline would be enhanced if we had more extensive studies of smaller areas. The strongest feature of Gardner's book is the combination of the theological and the social; but a more thoroughgoing rigor in the use of his principle of theological ethics in his social ethics chapter would have enhanced the book.

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The Christian Mission Today. Ed. by the Joint Section of Education and Cultivation of the Board of Missions of The Methodist Church. New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960. 280 pp. \$3.00 (cl.), \$2.25 (pap.).

The Missionary Church in East and West. Ed by CHARLES C. WEST and DAVID M. PATON. Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson (S.C.M. Press), 1960. 133 pp. \$2.00.

One World, One Mission. By W. RICHEY HOGG. New York: Friendship Press, 1960. ix-168 pp. \$2.95 (cl), \$1.50 (pap.).

1. *The Christian Mission Today* has been written by twenty-one contemporary leaders who have tried to explain honestly, critically, and creatively the Christian Mission in today's world. If the Christian Mission belongs at the heart of the church, it must be presented to both laymen and ministers in a way that challenges them to real commitment. In the confused, revolutionary, uncertain, rapidly changing world of today the church is asking many questions about its mission. Is it relevant? Have missions come to the end of an era? What do we mean by the term, "World Mission of the Church"? If we support the mission program financially, need we be otherwise involved? These and many other questions are being asked in our churches today.

Although *The Christian Mission Today* was prepared primarily for The Methodist Church, Parts A, D, and E are very pertinent for all churches as they face their task in the World Mission. Throughout the volume, the writers are concerned with presenting to the church the concept of its mission as "the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole church." The book is not concerned with administrative questions or the planning of particular programs, but rather with the basis of the Christian mission, with an understanding of its motivation. The chapter on Jesus Christ and the Christian Mission points out the necessity to understand the ministry of Christ if one would understand the church's mission in today's world.

Although twenty-one authors have written chapters, it is surprising how well the book has been welded into a whole. One might wish that a little more attention had been given to the challenge and responsibility of our churches to be involved in the important united efforts of the world mission. On the other hand this book, written by some of our ablest writers, has presented its material in clear, concise, convincing terms. (Writers include W. G. Muelder, W. V. Middleton, T. K. Jones, J. K. Mathews, B. E. Mays, C. W. Ranson, G. P. Warfield, J. R. Nelson, Stephen Neill.) This book should be in the library of ministers and laymen alike. It is the best volume of this kind that has come from the press in a long time.

2. *The Missionary Church in East and West* brings together papers presented to a group of pastors and missionaries meeting at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. The papers and discussion centered on the missionary nature of the church. The material presented came from Europe and Asia. It dealt with the philosophy of missionary societies organized, many of them in Europe, outside the churches, going out to plant churches in Asia and Africa. This book, like *The Christian Mission Today*, emphasizes that the mission is a task for the whole church.

The chapter on the Broken West, coming out of experiences in Germany, yet pertinent to many other countries in the West, leaves one with a feeling of pessimism, of defeated hope, of growing secularism. On the other hand, the Asian view of the church in the world arouses new hope, of confidence in the growing edge of the church, of new opportunities. These are seen in relation to the rapid social change,

and the ardent attempts of Muslims to adapt and adjust their faith to the modern world.

Perhaps the most useful chapter in the book is the last one in which Charles West, commenting on the preceding chapters, raises the question as to the "outlines of a church which would be missionary in their world." West's answer to this question is a series of very penetrating questions which all who are involved in the making of policies and the planning of missionary work would do well to ponder. Many of them will continue to plague us until they are answered.

3. *One World, One Mission* was written as the Foreign Missions Study Book for 1960-61. The study carries out in a very concrete way the same theme stressed in the other two books, namely that the mission of the church is one for all Christ's followers, and secondly, that unity in mission is important if our witness is to be effective. The distressing thing is that *One World, One Mission* is considered a Foreign Study. Should it not have been the study book for all, for the total mission of the church? Today when more and more the ecumenical mission is being stressed, and when authors like Hogg are presenting this mission in world terms, it is too bad that we go on labeling our studies "Home" and "Foreign" when the opportunity presents itself to have a world theme.

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Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. By EDWARD P. BLAIR. New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960. 176 pp. \$3.00.

Understanding the Sermon on the Mount. By HARVEY K. MCARTHUR. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960. 192 pp. \$3.50.

1. These two books, quite different in content and aim, have in common a concern to interpret a particular aspect of the Gospel of Matthew. Blair aims "to identify and characterize the distinctive elements in the author's Christology" (p. 8); his interest is in "Matthew's view of the way of salvation" (p. 9). An introductory chapter surveys recent scholars' work on "Major Issues in Matthean Studies." The Church's worship, teaching, and preaching have all played a part in the creation of this Gospel. It is a church book, written by a Jewish Christian between A.D. 70 and 100.

The heart of Blair's instructive study is in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. The study of "The Basis of Jesus' Authority" presents the Gospel's view of Jesus as Messiah, Son of God, and Son of Man, and shows the dominant category to be that of the Son of Man, but all three categories have deep meaning for the Gospel's author and they "flow together into an effective characterization of Jesus" (p. 84).

In Chapter 3, "The Authority of Jesus in the Realm of Knowledge," Blair emphasizes that "Matthew not only points out that the disciples understood Jesus' teaching but he insists that every hearer of the gospel message must *understand* it, if he is to become a disciple" (p. 106). "The Gospel of Matthew as a whole is simply a commentary on the crucially important passage 11:27-30 . . . The Son is the world's teacher and savior (28:18-20)."

Chapter 4 discusses "The Authority of Jesus in the Realm of Conduct." It shows the importance of good living, but places the concern for good conduct in the setting of "the total sweep of Matthew's thought. His doctrine of salvation revolves

around four centers, not just one: knowing, believing, being, and doing" (p. 135). This is not legalism; it summons man to be "inwardly good" and "actively benevolent" (p. 136).

In the closing chapter Blair points out that the Gospel of Matthew has notable parallels in the speech of Stephen (Acts 7) and in the ideas of the Qumran sect. This Gospel's special materials have roots in the Jewish-Christian Hellenist group of Jerusalem. This suggestion, worth serious study, is more debatable than the impressive and solid main argument of Blair's book.

2. McArthur's purpose is not to write an exposition or give a devotional study of the Sermon on the Mount, but "to deal with the basic practical, historical, and theological problems raised by a thoughtful reading" (p. 14). In an introductory chapter he presents "The Sermon as Problem," and discusses the sources of the material in Matthew 5-7. He concludes that "the original words of Jesus come to us veiled by the language and thought of the primitive Church. . . . Some sayings in the Sermon were created by the community while others were distorted by it. . . . The over-all thrust of Matt. 5-7 substantially reflects the attitude of Jesus" (pp. 22, 24).

In each of the next five chapters the author gives first a useful survey of the history of Christian interpretation of the question under study. We thus learn much about how ancient and medieval Christians, the Reformers, and more recent scholars have interpreted the Sermon. This is a unique and valuable contribution.

Another feature of the book's method is the listing of alternative views. Successive chapters present and analyze "four statements," "seven observations," "four perspectives," and "twelve approaches" which are then grouped into six secondary and six primary methods of interpretation. The author thus studies the Sermon's relation to the Mosaic tradition, to the Pauline tradition, to early Christian eschatological thought, and to ethics. The result is an exegetically based study; it presents fairly alternate views; it carefully criticizes each alternate view; and it avoids a narrow and artificial concentration on the Sermon by showing in a concluding chapter that it "is to be understood, finally, only in the light of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of him who proclaimed it" (p. 161).

Both of these books are simply outlined and clearly written. They combine scholarly integrity with a sense of what is vital and important for the Church. They do much to further understanding of the person and teaching of Jesus and to promote a better grasp of the Gospel of Matthew.

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The Protestant Faith. By GEORGE W. FORELL. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960. xi-320 pp. \$6.60.

Luther and Culture. By GEORGE W. FORELL, H. J. GRIMM, T. HOELTY-NICKEL. Decorah, Iowa: Luther College Press, 1960. ix-211 pp. \$3.00.

1. Dr. Forell, who taught undergraduates in Iowa State University, who came from many religious traditions or none, wrote his first book to answer the needs of just such a group of young people, although even older folk may profit from its reading. Sometimes the reader has a vivid impression that the very text of the lectures has remained unchanged—and effective lectures they must have been! The author often consciously uses the very expressions or formulations of thought the

average students would use. I know of no book which would appeal to that particular group as this one would; and I would not hesitate to recommend it to more mature readers as well, for they constantly cry for theological works written in language they can understand!

The subject is that of the Protestant Faith; and the author, instead of discussing the latest theological fads, presents his readers with what he quite rightly calls "classical Protestantism." His chief authorities are Luther, Calvin, and to some degree Wesley. He quotes modern writers as well, and among them many currently prominent theologians: but the basic fabric is derived from the principal Reformers. However, his is not a mere historical study of what they taught: he reinterprets it without distorting it or explaining it away. And although the book represents the substance of his lectures to undergraduates, it is no mere "predigested pap for toothless gums." Dr. Forell uses nontechnical language, but expounds solid basic doctrines of Protestantism without shirking profound themes and unpopular doctrines. Moreover, although his own Lutheranism does not lose in effectiveness in the process, he is aiming at an integrated presentation of Protestantism, so that its unity in essentials may be easily perceived. These basic themes are as follows: the grace and sovereignty of God, faith, Scripture as the rule of faith, the priesthood of all believers, the fallibility of man and of all human institutions (p. 17). These are then expounded in a fashion against which but few could raise valid objections.

It is hard to quarrel with Dr. Forell's exposition; and yet I must point to at least one peccadillo. Referring to Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor, he asserts that the old man "wants to be God, because he refuses to let God be God" (p. 136). In my understanding of Dostoevsky's masterpiece the Grand Inquisitor has rejected faith in God altogether and himself professes that "we have gone with *him*"—the Great Tempter of Christ in the wilderness. On the other hand, I definitely side with Dr. Forell in his assertion that "Albert Schweitzer can hardly be considered an exponent of classical Protestantism" (p. 156).

A useful feature of the book is the Appendix (pp. 253-312) comprising ancient and Reformation creeds and adding even a few modern ones. Altogether, here is a book that would prove enlightening to many of our intelligent laymen, young and old—and, I would venture to say, even to some ministers!

2. The second book under consideration, *Luther and Culture*, represents volume IV of the Martin Luther Lectures, delivered by three outstanding Luther scholars on different aspects of the Reformer's thought and work. The first of these, Dr. Forell, deals with "Luther and Politics." It is a forthright and trenchant presentation of Luther's views on three aspects of this subject, and treats of his relation to both foreign and domestic policies. If Luther did not think reason capable of dealing with matters of faith, he, on the other hand, asserted it to be "an essential tool in the ordering of human affairs" (p. 16). His treatment of political themes is "an unexpected combination of realism, conservatism, and pragmatism" (p. 28). The Emperor "has no business in matters of faith" (p. 32). Accordingly, he warned the Emperor against any "religious" wars and condemned the Pope for inciting the secular rulers to them. Luther's attitude to the peasants' uprising is explained in that he opposed the confusion of "the kingdom of God and the peasants' own 'doubtful utopia'."

The second group of essays under the general caption of "Luther and Education" is contributed by Harold J. Grimm, and deals with Luther's own contribution to education and his efforts to induce the princes to do likewise. "Luther was the first educator in modern times to see the need for universal, compulsory education"

(p. 84). He advised the Margrave of Brandenburg to establish a territorial system of primary schools culminating in one or two universities. Moreover, he advocated a much wider scope of education, including even science.

The third group, written by Theodore Hoelty-Nickel, deals with "Luther and Music." It presents much new information about Luther's interest in liturgy, congregational singing, and particularly his "German Mass," which was to supplant the Latin Mass, even though the principal elements of the latter were preserved. This is an instructive study, though outside the present reviewer's field.

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Victor and Victim: The Christian Doctrine of Redemption. By J. S. WHALE. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1960. 172 pp. \$3.75.

The Protestant Tradition. By J. S. WHALE. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1959. xv-360 pp. \$1.75 (pap.).

There is so much obscure and obfuscating theology being written that a book by Dr. John S. Whale is indeed an oasis in a dry land. Whale has the ability to express great and profound theological ideas in an attractive and stimulating manner. A learned and lucid writer, he manages to pull us into the midst of the stream of modern scholarship. "Come on in, the water is fine," he seems to shout, and suddenly we find ourselves in the water with him, swimming in the theological stream and enjoying it.

Both historical and systematic theology excite Dr. Whale and he is able to share his excitement with his readers. In his *The Protestant Tradition*, which was reissued in 1959 in a paperback edition, he involves us in the result of fifty years of Reformation research in such a vital manner that we hardly notice that what he presents so sparkingly is often based on some rather heavy and dull historical and theological monographs.

Similarly, in his recent *Victor and Victim* we have a survey of much recent biblical and systematic theology in a most attractive package. He deals with the meaning of Christ's atonement, utilizing the insights gained from the recent emphasis upon the *Christus Victor* motif without dismissing the substitution motif as meaningless or perverse. He reminds us, "Critics of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* have always to meet the scrutiny of its most famous sentence: *nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum* (Thou hast not yet considered how great is the weight of sin)."

In his chapter, "The Offense of Particularity," he has typically utilized the resources of theology, philosophy and poetry to elucidate this key problem of the Christian proclamation. He quotes Tillich's *Systematic Theology* and also Alice Meynell's answer to the problem:

"But in the eternities
Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
A million alien Gospels, in what guise
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.
O be prepared, my soul!
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The million forms of God those stars unroll
When, in our turn, we show to them a Man." (p. 97)

This breadth of presentation is typical for the whole book, whether he deals with the sacraments or the resurrection. Everywhere he draws upon a multitude of sources to interpret theology in a contemporary and meaningful manner.

If there is one objection, it would be that not all of Dr. Whale's illustrations are in the best of taste. He avoids being stuffy but he does not always escape being "corny." To describe the eschatological climax of history with a quotation from *The Lost Chord* or Satan as "God's Lord High Executioner," or to say, "Israel was not 'teacher's pet' even though some Israelites cherished this illusion," is not really very helpful. All in all, however, Whale's books, while never intended to present original research, are good introduction to the theological discussion of the day. Perhaps the reader who has been introduced to the excitement of theological thought by Dr. Whale will follow up some of the footnotes. I am sure Dr. Whale would be most pleased.

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The West in Crisis. By JAMES P. WARBURG. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1959. 192 pp. \$3.50.

Can We End the Cold War? By LEO PERLA. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960. xii-251 pp. \$4.50.

The nuclear danger confronting the world and the continuing tension of the cold war are the background for both books. But "the mortal threat to Western civilization," according to James Warburg, "is not the enemy without but the enemy within." Western man not only assumes he is superior to the rest of the world but has grown complacent about public affairs, leaving decisions to military and political leaders. "The question of nuclear warfare has become a moral problem for the individual rather than merely a problem for governments . . ." he says. This problem "cannot be delegated" to others. The people must insist on the "abolition of war through disarmament."

Mr. Perla sees the moral problem in somewhat different terms. It is our double standard of morality which makes us impotent. We have one standard for national conduct and another for personal; one standard by which we judge the acts of our own nation, and another by which we judge similar acts of the enemy. While "we are engaged abroad in a Truth Crusade" aimed at totalitarianism, false propaganda and violence, "we have created an intellectual climate" at home "that stifles any genuine attempt at exploring alternatives to violence."

The great virtue of James Warburg's approach is the concreteness with which he analyzes foreign policy and also prescribes solutions. In a carefully reasoned and interesting manner he discusses Berlin and rivalry in the Near and Far East, proposing disengagement in Europe and the Middle East and a specific program of negotiation with China. His chapters on economics reveal that "the American economy is grinding to a halt primarily . . . because it has not geared itself to world needs and because American production has become producer-oriented rather than consumer-oriented." Prices in steel for example are no longer "set by the workings of supply and demand" but, to maintain exorbitant profits, were "administered upward" even when the industry "was working at something like half its capacity." Other economic policies create "an atmosphere in which people are compelled to associate disarmament with

the loss of jobs and the loss of profits," thus creating a "growing vested interest in having the cold war continue . . ."

Without doubt the Warburg book is important and provocative. Leo Perla's approach is more philosophic. Instead of examining events and prescribing solutions it examines the clichés, such as "No appeasement" and "Negotiate from strength," which justify American policy. "Inflexibility obviously demands appeasement from the other side" if war is to be averted. "History is full of examples of cases where war was avoided because one side gave way." On the other hand, "Inflexibility is a calculated philosophy which ignores the danger involved in miscalculating an opponent's submissiveness."

Mr. Perla's book is less readable than Warburg's, being sometimes repetitive. Quite obviously Mr. Perla objects to those theological and political writers who assert that nations cannot act in moral ways. Yet in maintaining this position he nevertheless justifies immoral action if national security really requires it. He thus accepts a relative standard of morality differing only in degree from those he criticizes. In spite of these weaknesses the book makes a real contribution to current political thought.

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The Rebirth of Ministry. By JAMES D. SMART. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960. 192 pp. \$3.50.

Biblical Authority for Modern Preaching. By CHARLES W. F. SMITH. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960. 176 pp. \$3.50.

1. From Westminster come two books which reveal a determined grappling with the mingled, dappled realm of Ministry. Each of these volumes, albeit differently, begins with Scripture, as befits the imprint of a press in sturdy Reformed tradition. For it is the tension between God's Word—in Scripture and sacrament—and the world, which makes Reformation endless and dynamic. And it is precisely in this context of Word and world that James Smart carries out his part of the exploration. We have come to expect good things from Professor Smart, who is, among other things, a pioneer in seeing religious education as the teaching ministry of the church and not merely a departmental chore.

Carefully Smart considers the Apostolic ministry, making "the ministry of Jesus Christ" the determinant of the essential nature of the Christian ministry for all time. From this focus in Christ he moves back into a consideration of the prophetic, priestly and kingly categories of ministry in the Old Testament and then forward into the ministry of the early church. Thence he moves on to consideration of the ministry today (with a somewhat narrowed focus on the minister today) in terms of preacher, teacher, pastor, theologian, evangelist.

This realm is probably as complex and confusing as any in our time. At least most thoughtful working ministers think so. The captivity of the contemporary American minister to his culture and his ecclesiastical institution is nowhere more bafflingly clear than in the fact that his "success" is often measurable by the extent to which he adjusts to culture and mutes the cutting edges of the Gospel. In an age of unparalleled statistical success the church seems to be irrelevant to the real issues of our time. How much does it really effect the central decisions of a man's life and work, the direction and content of personal and national purpose and morality? How

dismayingly often is the church uncritically supportive of lesser loyalties and blandly comforting in the face of shocks which ought to be creative?

If there is any fault with Smart's book it is that he works in this realm of dynamite and marshmallow with a strange and deceptive calm. From one point of view his serious, clear analysis is helpful: he lays the scalpel point to the clean bone and bare nerve. From another it is all too calm and placid. He finds his hope to lie in the reopening of Scripture by newly vigorous biblical scholarship; but how far into church life has this awakening gone? Similarly he takes hope in the rebirth of critical theology which ventures out of the study into the streets, the deep new note of unity in the church, the growing depth and urgency in evangelism, and the new life in the laity and the lay ministry. With all due respect, these hopeful signs seem to be noted by a man who is not looking closely and clearly at the local church, the front-line trench of the faith, the point where the mission confronts the world—in it and, sadly, very much of it.

Christ is never at ease in culture, nor will his church ever find a neat balance between being "in" and yet not "of" the world. Ministry—rooted in God's saving act, and not rendered trivial, irrelevant, pious, or downright blasphemous by the world—is the great uneasy problem of our time. Smart does his greatest service by reminding us in a dozen sober, thoughtful ways that administrative, organizational approaches are no answers, but only further forays into the morass of entanglement with culture. A basic theological stance, wherein each act and utterance is seen rooted in God's act and utterance, is the only saving way.

2. Charles W. F. Smith, of the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Cambridge, tantalizes us with the title, "Biblical Authority for Modern Preaching," and then actually delivers us a volume which works from the surface of Scripture and concerns itself largely with the mechanics of preaching the liturgical year. This is strip mining, not deep-level mining. It is not really the turbulent, shocking heart of the Bible which concerns him, but rather the "how to do it" aspect. At this level the book is moderately helpful, though through it all one has the feeling that the point is somehow missed. This volume will not, as Smart's does, take the parson by the hand and lead him into the thick of the fray, where the fighting is hardest and the issue in balance. Perhaps it is not meant to do so, but the title does raise hopes which are unanswered.

HARLAND G. LEWIS

The First Church of Christ, Congregational, Farmington, Connecticut.

History of Religion in the United States. By CLIFTON E. OLMSTEAD. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960. xii-628 pp. \$10.00.

Full-scale histories of American religion have been so anxiously awaited, and for so long a time, that the appearance of Professor Olmstead's volume may arouse some hopes which the book is not designed to fulfill. This is not the sorely-needed interpretative treatment, breaking new pathways for research. Instead, it is a work of synthesis, bringing together in readable and highly organized fashion the scholarly findings of the past thirty years. To appreciate the value and magnitude of such an undertaking, one need only glance at Olmstead's extensive bibliographies, which attest to the sheer fecundity of scholarship in this field since William Warren Sweet's *Story of Religions in America* (1930).

Olmstead's organization of his subject is similar to Sweet's for the period through the Civil War. He deals with each of the religious groups transplanted to the colonies,

and organizes an equal number of chapters around such topics as the Great Awakening, the Revolution, westward expansion, and missions. His treatment of the sixteenth-century background goes well beyond Sweet, as does his attention to the influence of the French and the Spanish on the American continent.

For the post-Civil War period, which was so seriously neglected in Sweet's account, Olmstead provides outstanding summaries of the denominational consolidations and of the various confrontations between religion and American culture. His final chapters deal with twentieth-century religious cults; with movements toward ecumenicity; with the challenges of "normalcy," depression, and war; and with the paradoxical shape of religion at mid-century.

Two of the chief virtues of this work—its comprehensiveness and its deftly concise treatment of each topic—are also the sources of its more serious defects. "Absorbing and informative," says the publisher, but the book frequently is too "informative" to be absorbing. Like many other competent works of synthesis, this one overwhelms with facts, leaving the reader with too few clear impressions of meaning. The difficulties of compressing American religious history into a single volume were no doubt formidable; but someone, either author or publisher, failed to face the necessary decision between a volume narrative in conception and one essentially encyclopedic.

One may add—not criticizing Olmstead so much as the whole corpus of interpretations on which he reports—that the denominational breakdown of so many topics in the latter two-thirds of the book seems as questionable as it is conventional. Many of Olmstead's sections on particular religious or social problems become roll-calls of denominations—each of which votes its Aye or Nay with certain embellishments. Denominational categories should be considered meaningful so far as denominational differences were truly significant and controlling; but the tendency, in this book as elsewhere, is to ride along with them well beyond that point. The old-time denominational historian, that necessary fellow, still has us in thrall more than we may suppose.

Olmstead's thoroughness, catholicity, theological grasp, and impressive mastery of both historical and church-historical sources justify a serious plea to this author for further work, equal in range but with more elbow room for interpretation. Meanwhile, despite limitations, *History of Religion in the United States* is a considerable achievement and the most useful book of its kind in the field of American church history.

WILLIAM R. HUTCHISON

Associate Professor of American Civilization, The American University, Washington, D. C.

Methodism and Society in Theological Perspective. (*Methodism and Society*, Volume III.) By S. PAUL SCHILLING. New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960. 318 pp. \$5.00.

This book is Volume III of a larger four-volume study of "Methodism and Society." The whole project is the product of the co-operative effort of the Board of Social and Economic Relations of The Methodist Church and the faculty of the Boston University School of Theology.

The main objective of this volume is to set forth in broad outline a theology of society. The author, S. Paul Schilling, professor of Systematic Theology of the

Boston University School of Theology, rightly claims that this is one of the great needs in American Protestantism. Since the author's primary concern is with the interaction of the Methodist branch of Protestantism and American society, and since his own theological convictions are Wesleyan, his theology of society is constructed within the framework of the Methodist tradition. This procedure does not, however, rob Dr. Schilling's construction of a "broad Protestant approach."

The author first elaborates the social implications of Wesley's theology. This is followed by an analysis of the persisting theological influences of Wesleyan emphases in The Methodist Church of today, an analysis of beliefs shared by Methodists and other Protestants with special reference to their social implications, a report of "the beliefs of Methodists in 1959," and the interaction of religion and culture as revealed in social decision.

The author finds the foundation principle for a theology of society in "a joyous, grateful response to the redemptive action of God in Jesus Christ." In other words, the doctrine of redemption is the key principle of a theology of society. When this doctrine is made determinative, evangelism and social action are united. Furthermore, repentance, faith, and holiness—the three aspects which were basic in Wesley's account of individual redemption—"provide a natural framework for the development of a doctrine of social salvation."

Dr. Schilling presents a special discussion of "the validity of Christian Concern for personal holiness." But he fails to show how such concern can escape narrowness, defensiveness, and self-consciousness—charges brought by those theologians with whom the author is in dialogue at this point. Actually, these neo-Reformation theologians do not separate sanctification from justification. What they do claim is that insofar as we are sanctified, it is because grace has delivered us from all forms of self-seeking, even the seeking of our own holiness.

The author's discussion of the need of guiding principles in social decisions is quite fruitful. Here he rightly criticizes "situational ethics" for sometimes failing to answer the question "What should I do?" There is a tendency in some situational ethics so to overstress "the decision in the moment of encounter" that action becomes impossible unless one receives "supernatural propositions"—which is precisely the view of revelation denied by the same theologians.

This volume is a valuable addition to much needed literature in the area of ethics and social policy.

GEORGE D. KELSEY

Professor of Christian Ethics, The Theological School, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey.

God's Colony in Man's World. By GEORGE W. WEBBER. New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960. 155 pp. \$2.75.

Nowhere on the American scene is the church being put more acutely to the test than it is in the crowded social jungles at the heart of our great cities. It is entirely appropriate, therefore, that this probing, provocative volume, exploring afresh the meaning of the gospel, the true nature of the Christian community, the mission of the church, and the doctrine of the ministry, in down-to-earth, practical terms, should come from the pen of one of the pioneers in what is probably Protestantism's best-known experimental effort to adapt itself to the exigencies of the inner-city situation.

The author is one of the ministers of the East Harlem Protestant Parish in New

York City, and has worked in that parish since its beginning in 1948. His book is not so much the story of the East Harlem Parish as it is an effort to articulate the theological, philosophical, and social perspectives and convictions which contributed to the founding of that parish or which have been forged in the fires of creative experience through the years of experimental effort invested in the parish program. Like a lecturer using a slide projector to illustrate his message, the author makes references to East Harlem only when what is found or has transpired there serves to clarify or illustrate the point he is making about the life and mission of the church anywhere.

Though the book is somewhat loosely organized, ramblingly sermonic, and possibly controversial theologically at several points, it manages to convey a dynamic and greatly needed challenge to the far too prevalent, stereotyped, insular, conventional type of Protestant church which has so lost its sense of mission that it tends to be at peace with the *status quo* in an unredeemed social order. By means of a wealth of enlightening anecdotes, forceful arguments, and pointed appeals to realism and Christian value-sensitivity, the author makes a good case for the fact that every church is, to use one of Saint Paul's metaphors, an outpost of the kingdom of God, a colonizing mission station placed in its community to "bear witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ."

The superficiality of many of the traditional conceptions and program practices associated with the church's functioning is made shockingly evident when viewed against the backdrop of social disorganization, depersonalization, and demoralization found in such places as East Harlem. How can the church be the church in a situation where middle-class virtues and middle-class customs do not prevail, where such trusted techniques as "revivalism" and "visitation evangelism" prove ineffective, and where there is a rather strongly negative attitude toward religion and the church?

While delineating the rationale within which the East Harlem Parish originated and has evolved, the book conveys a powerful challenge to leaders of the church in general. No thoughtful churchman can read it without being stimulated to a serious reappraisal of the church's program and mission in this crowded, complex, confused, cynical, secular, materialistic, modern world.

HASKELL M. MILLER

Professor of Social Ethics, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington 16, D. C.

God's Unfolding Purpose. By SUZANNE DE DIETRICH. Translated by Robert McAfee Brown. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960. 287 pp. \$4.50.

Suzanne de Dietrich, long a leader in the World's Student Christian Federation and director of Bible study at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, has probably helped more lay people to grasp the basic message of the Bible than any other living person in the European scene. Her Bible study guide, *Le Dessein de Dieu*, first published in 1943, is now made available in English through Robert McAfee Brown's free but very readable translation.

The book follows a mode of study more familiar and perhaps more congenial to European Christians than to American; namely, the centering of everything in the Bible from the earliest Old Testament writings onward in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. That is to say, it is written from the *Heilsgeschichte* point of view. This has both its significantly helpful aspects and its limitations.

In spite of the Bible's great diversity of authorship and at least a thousand years

of time span in its constituent elements, there is a great unity in the Bible which Miss de Dietrich vividly sets forth. In its unfolding drama, the Creation and the Fall at the beginning of time stand as prologue. Then Act I, which the author modestly terms Part One of her book, carries the chosen people from the patriarchs through the covenant at Sinai to the promised land and thence to the exile and the return of the remnant. A briefer but climactic Act II, the Gospels, brings the design of God in the fullness of time to its fulfillment in the Incarnation. The third act in the great drama is the time of the Church, during which the Christian community lives expectantly between the times of Christ's first coming and his return. As epilogue, there is the vision of the "new heavens and a new earth," with the final consummation beyond earthly time and space.

As I read the book I found myself with conflicting feelings—admiration at the author's skill in thus portraying the great sweep of the biblical drama, uneasiness lest she was finding too much foreshadowing of the New Testament in the Old. As the epochs of Hebrew history are traced, references to the New Testament appear on almost every page. Some of these refer very helpfully to the way in which the New Testament writers drew upon their heritage; others seem to me to walk close to the edge of the allegorizing method. Had the author seen fit to let the grand design be portrayed in terms somewhat less specific, somewhat more historically and culturally conditioned, I should have been happier. Nevertheless, the book as a whole is an illuminating and hence a very useful contribution to the understanding of the primary message of the Bible.

GEORGIA HARKNESS

Professor of Applied Theology, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California.

The Providence of God. By GEORGIA HARKNESS. New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960. 192 pp. \$3.50.

This book could serve well as an introduction to Christian theology. However, it is no less a book on providence because of the range of its theological discussion. The author fully justifies her position that "Nothing very fruitful can be said about providence except as this is placed in the wider setting of the nature of God and His relation to men."

Special providences take place within a structure of general providence, and it is this structure, fitted together and strong, that stands forth in this study. The Creator of the heavens and the earth is a personal God. This same God by a purposeful plan guides the course of created things and the destinies of men. Destiny when viewed in connection with providence is always personal. It is the result of the activity of both God and man. God has not fixed the fate of any man, but there is nothing that can separate him from the love of God.

The meaning of providence is never so clear as when in the midst of sin, suffering and frustration one comes to know the companionship of God and his redeeming grace. The author does not overlook the natural channels of grace—world of beauty, world of truth, accumulated wisdom of man, adventure, good earth, work, leisure, relaxation—but affirms that in Jesus Christ alone is the full, complete and adequate channel of God's redemptive grace. The mystery of his redemption is too great for us to explain but we can experience it, and we can see it in other lives that have been changed.

"God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." This is the supreme event in which God gave and still gives power to meet the evils

that assail us. But the cross is not God's last word. In the power of the resurrection of Christ the company of disciples "came alive." We too experience that power, and no evil can defeat us.

Dr. Harkness believes that the heart of the question of providence is prayer. To pray in the mood of penitence and confession "yields more faith in God's providence than can be established through any vindication of the ways of God that on speculative grounds alone tries to solve the problem of evil but overlooks the forgiveness of sin and the imparting of new life."

In the discussion of miracle and natural law as they relate to providence Dr. Harkness expresses her agreement with Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, who in his *The Modern Use of the Bible* declared that: (1) the concept of "law" does not exhaust reality, (2) law is not a means of imprisonment for personality, (3) existence is not a closed system into which nothing new can come.

The author asserts that she has a "high regard" for the concept of miracle, but rejects the idea of divine intervention. God does not come in from outside our world. Although he is transcendent he is here, acting constantly, creating, directing and bringing help to people in their deepest needs. Miracles are real. Surpassing all other miracles is Jesus Christ. The supreme miracle that can happen to anyone is to know his presence and his healing.

The primary problems and certainties of providence lie in what God has beyond death for the individual. The true meaning of eternity is the continuance of personal existence. Therefore what happens here has its consequence in eternal life. It is important, because time bears on eternity, that we have a clearer understanding of time. There are three kinds of time. First, there is chronological or calendar time, necessary to planning ahead and assessing the past; necessary to history. Then there is experienced time, "the mind's awareness of change in the passage of time and the occurrence of events." Personality is made up in a large measure by experienced time, the meaning of events, the sense of achievement, loves and aspirations. The faith that the times are in his hand results in the reality of God's providence.

The third kind of time is of special significance to the fact of providence. It is *kairos*, the time of opportunity and demand. In it God speaks to say, "Therefore choose life!" Providence is not predestination. Providence never cancels human freedom. We stand always at the point of decision. The decisions we make in time affect the personal existence that continues into eternity.

This book speaks clearly, persuasively and hopefully to our time, a time when many are exhausting themselves in the search for security because they lack certainty. One puts this book down more assured that God is not far from each one of us, that in him we live and move and have our being.

HAMPTON ADAMS

Park Avenue Christian Church, 1010 Park Avenue, New York City.

The Self in Pilgrimage. By EARL A. LOOMIS, JR. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960. xvii-109 pp. \$3.00.

Out of the Depths: An Autobiographical Study of Mental Disorder and Religious Experience. By ANTON T. BOISEN. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960. 216 pp. \$4.00.

1. *The Self in Pilgrimage* is a bold book, significant and prophetic enough to command serious attention. It unites crucial insights from both psychiatry and theology

in regard to the depth problems of every person. Yet the style is lucid. The author directs both the Program of Psychiatry and Religion at Union Theological Seminary and the Child Psychiatry Division at St. Luke's Hospital in New York. The importance of this confessional and professional witness is evident by its two forewords, by Professor Reinhold Niebuhr and Dr. Kenneth E. Appel, respectively.

Vivid illustrations are used from modern life, history, philosophy, and the Bible. The author probes the fears and blessings of knowing and accepting both the good and the "evil" in oneself. He explores everyone's "three gods," the emergence and development of human personality, and the self in society ("communication," "community," "hell," and "communion"). His interests range from sin and grace to concentration camps, and from Martin Buber to St. Augustine.

He claims, "There is risk in knowing ourselves, just as there is risk in any investment. We may not like some of the things we find. Or we may not succeed in realizing a return on our talents. But if we permit our fears to be carried to extremes, we become paralyzed. Afraid to fall, we would never walk. Afraid to love, we would never live. . . . There are ways of believing in oneself without making oneself the center of the universe." He warns, "We have a skepticism that saves us from *witches*. But in our own time our very skepticism is reserved for the superstitions of other persons and other times. . . . We can laugh at the witches of others but can't recognize our own."

Any concerned reader can benefit from the author's effort at a "break-through" to understand human life with faith and learning. One may not always agree. But he will think, especially if he is a theologian, psychiatrist, minister, teacher, or parent.

2. *Out of the Depths*, a "case record," is a provocative self-study of the leading modern explorer of the role of religion in mental illness and recovery. Dr. Boisen, the second full-time chaplain of a mental institution in America and the father of the seminaries' clinical training movement, shares frankly from his own psychosis and series of relapses. It is the first such book by an expert in the psychology of religion.

He presents his record as "a case of valid religious experience which was at the same time madness of the most profound and unmistakable variety." This supports his "central thesis that certain forms of mental disorder and certain forms of religious experience are closely related." His experience reinforces his conclusion that the inner struggle between severe demands of conscience and desire is not necessarily solved by "lowering the conscience threshold."

In spite of his humility and restraint, the major contribution of this work may not be so much the record of the author's "case," but Dr. Boisen's autobiographical account of his leadership in inspiring teamwork and co-operation between the resources of religion and psychiatry for helping the mentally ill. If so, this book deserves a place alongside his famed *Exploration of the Inner World*.

The personal story of his lifelong love for a woman, who did not respond mutually, is fascinating and puzzling. In any case, he rightly senses that his frustrating love affair helped to make his creative pioneering and writing possible.

As I see it, this book is primarily for students in the field of the psychology of religion and mental health.

R. FREDERICK WEST

St. Paul's Christian Church, Raleigh, North Carolina.

An Inquiry Into Faith. By J. WESLEY ROBB. Nashville: National Methodist Student Movement, 1960. 119 pp. \$1.00.

The Church: Its Origin and Task. By ALBERT E. BARNETT. Nashville: National Methodist Student Movement, 1960. 101 pp. \$1.00.

1. Anyone with a vital concern for evangelism, and who knows anything about contemporary campus life, will probably give a hearty second to the purpose and aims of Dr. Robb's paperback—to stimulate professing Christians as well as "easy agnostics" among undergraduates to discover the vitality and relevance of religion. The book starts where any effort to make faith a live concern with students should start. It starts with a realistic facing up to the challenges and denials, real and implied, that religion faces within the academic community. This is followed up in a logical and interesting way with the business of interpreting religious faith with intellectual rigor and then applying it realistically. Occasionally the discussion leads into what will be deep water for some students. And this definitely is not a book for those overly pious ones who can emerge from four years of college with essentially the same "faith" with which they entered.

The book has apparently been structured with discussion groups in mind. Thus it will be welcomed by campus pastors and directors of student religious organizations. The discussion questions at the end of each chapter seem not to be as provocative and stimulating as the text itself. But of course no two people would agree on how to write a book like this. The point is that it *has* been written, and it is well designed to accomplish its worthy purpose.

2. If one did not immediately recognize the author of *The Church: Its Origin and Task* as the eminent professor of New Testament at Candler School of Theology, he would still get an accurate clue to the approach made in this little book from its subtitle: A Study of Biblical Sources. Dr. Barnett undertakes to lay a sound basis for theologizing about the church by looking carefully at the first-century roots of the Christian church as revealed in New Testament writings. First he surveys the literature in its entirety to find an adequate answer to the question, Whose is the church? In succeeding chapters he focuses upon smaller units of the source material for more systematic study. Throughout the book there are copious references to the relevant biblical passages, for Dr. Barnett is anxious that this be an incentive and guide for Bible study—not a substitute for it. It cannot be scanned for just a few minutes as a pump primer before the group session. And this is good. Conscientious study of this guide will reward the diligent student and awaken the indifferent, pointing them to the meaning of Christian faith and a lofty yet realistic concept of the church.

P. S. ELLIS, JR.

Editor, College Texts, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee.

He Ascended Into Heaven. By J. G. DAVIES. New York: Association Press, 1959. 224 pp. \$4.75.

No doctrine about Jesus Christ, no recorded event about him, has been so embarrassing to the modern mind as that of his ascension into heaven. The consequence has been, as Dr. Davies observes in the preface to this volume containing the Bampton Lectures he delivered before the University of Oxford in 1958, that there has been a serious neglect of the doctrine for many years. Indeed, Dr. Davies' work is the first full-scale treatment of the theme during this century.

There are many merits in Dr. Davies' handling of his theme. He has delivered

us from the quite disproportionate reliance upon St. Luke's narrative in Acts 1; he has set the idea in its Old Testament perspective, and has drawn proper attention to the many other New Testament testimonies to the ascension; and it appears that neither the "geographical" removal nor the precise interval of forty days belong to the essence of the story. The ascension is once more restored to its rightful place as an essential part of the one act of triumph over death. Dr. Davies is equally alert to the theological implications of his theme, and he well states his view that any true Christology requires the ascension as part of its biblical tradition; for Christ is not only declared to be alive, he must also be sovereign.

Dr. Davies, like anyone who observes the dominance of the New Testament witness to an ascension on Easter Day itself, has to give an account of St. Luke's reference to forty days in Acts. He finds his typological material in the figure and tradition of Elijah. It might be equally possible to suggest that Luke, having transferred the typological "forty" from the years of the Israelites' wandering in the desert to the forty days of Christ's temptation in the wilderness, is now transferring it to the final antitype of the Exodus itself—the cross and resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, to indicate that here the people of God is finally and eternally constituted in the person of his Son. This book is an essential part of every thinking Christian's library.

JOHN MARSH

Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, England.

This World and the Beyond: Marburg Sermons. By RUDOLF BULTMANN.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960. 248 pp. \$3.50.

This volume of sermons by a distinguished European preacher will be welcomed for its own sake; but there are two factors relating to its background that will especially arouse a reader's curiosity today. The first is that these sermons were preached during the period that covered "the rise and fall of the Third Reich." Readers of Schirer's book will have the necessary background for these sermons—the Acts of the Nazis, as it were, as framework for the Epistles of Bultmann—and also a necessary corrective to his general condemnation of the Protestant churches. The other consuming interest will be to see how the controversial proponent of "demythologization" uses the biblical material in normal pulpit preaching.

Readers will find here direct and scholarly expositions of well-known texts in which the biblical message is applied to the current situation. In some ways the sermons are less expository than is the European habit, and the evangelistic impulse behind Bultmann's theological forays is evident in the constant attempt to commend the gospel to his hearers. But it is the gospel he commends. And, while not avoiding occasional critical questions of myth and miracle, he displays no signs of being the "enfant terrible" of modern theology.

"Do we belong to those who suffer in the world as it is?" This question, raised in one of the sermons, is answered by the preacher on nearly every page. The Word is here proclaimed throughout the rise and fall of the demonic and barbaric regime with a consistency that only those who have lived under such conditions would have the right to question. We have much to learn from such preaching today, and this volume will find its way to discriminating shelves.

DAVID H. C. READ

The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York 21, New York.

Albert Schweitzer: A Study of His Philosophy of Life. By GABRIEL LANGFELDT. Trans. from Norwegian by Maurice Michael. New York: George Braziller, 1960. 119 pp. \$3.00.

Dr. Schweitzer of Lambaréne. By NORMAN COUSINS (photographs by Clara Urquhart). New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960. 254 pp. \$3.95.

Biographers can't be objective, thank goodness! It would be a dull wit who tried to portray the life and nature of another human being without admitting his emotional involvement with the subject of the biography. Nor does this mean that the biographer must be a gullible soul who sees no error in the biographee. As a matter of fact Norman Cousins in his *Dr. Schweitzer of Lambaréne* has brought us one of the most refreshing illustrations of good biography because he has been able to admire and portray with candor this much-discussed man. One gets to know the biographer and the biographee—and this is like making two new friends.

The theological problem of Schweitzer is well handled and illustrates beautifully the inevitable conflict between Christian life and thought and (some) continental theology. The reluctance both men share on making neat pronouncements about unctuous personal beliefs is resolved with directness when it becomes clear that what happens to people where they are is the compelling question. Mrs. Schweitzer is a stabilizer—not a counterbalance. Dr. Schweitzer struggles to stare back at reality when reality stares and glares at him. . . . And you are glad to be a participant in all of this candid walk and talk with Schweitzer and Cousins!

The Norwegian scholar, Gabriel Langfeldt, has looked at Schweitzer's philosophy. He shows a number of ways to appraise and allows the reader to reach a few of his own conclusions. As one might talk about true religious experience, this writer insists that one must experience Schweitzer. Langfeldt is careful with facts, yet does introduce insights here that are sturdy. He sees in childhood experiences implications of Schweitzer's solidarity, reverence for life, and his ability to put himself in his companion's place. Some will disagree, but Langfeldt has done a unique interpretation of the Christian pragmatism of Schweitzer—especially in the light of William James' thesis in *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Pragmatism has been such a naughty word of late that it is exciting to use it in understanding the great Schweitzer. But at least those who go off on clouds and get stars in their eyes every time they "Schweitzerize" should read Langfeldt's appraisal.

E. S. B.

Serious students of the ecumenical movement should know about a comprehensive church lexicon or "ecumenical handbook" in German: *Weltkirchen Lexicon: Handbuch der Oekumene*. This volume is edited by Franklin H. Littell and Hans Hermann Walz, with a galaxy of distinguished advisors: Florovsky, Freytag, Keller, Kraemer, Latourette, Neill, Niebuhr, Skydsgaard. It was commissioned by the *Kirchentag* (laymen's rally of central Europe), in which both editors have been leaders; published by Kreuz-Verlag GMBH, Stuttgart, Germany. It has 896 pages and 48 fine illustrations (interchurch aid, church architecture and Christian art in many lands, events in ecumenical history, etc.). It is good to learn that Doubleday is to publish a translation, in three or four paperback volumes.

A collection of the stirring writings of Pastor Johannes Hamel in "God's Beloved East Zone" has been published by Association Press under the title, *A Christian in*

East Germany. Introduced and translated by Charles C. and Ruth West; Association Press, \$3.50. A pastor and student chaplain who has lived dangerously for Christ from 1935 on, Hamel is now Director of the Seminary in Naumburg.

Community, State and Church is a Doubleday paperback containing three essays by Karl Barth (95c.). Will Herberg has written an introduction on "The Social Philosophy of Karl Barth"; the three essays follow, "Gospel and Law," "Church and State," "The Christian Community and the Civil Community." There is a bibliography of relevant works of Barth available in English.

A recent Pendle Hill pamphlet is *The Covenant of Peace*, "a personal witness" by Maurice Friedman, the author, editor and translator who has done so much to make Martin Buber better known in this country. A moving testimony of a Jewish pacifist's growth in understanding through the events of three decades. He weighs the contributions of Gandhi, Schweitzer, Buber, and other thinkers and mystics of East and West. Another appealing pamphlet is *Psychotherapy based on Human Longing*, by Robert C. Murphy, Jr.—"a subjective and intuitive account of my experience in psychotherapy." (Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pa., 35c. each.)

Shirley E. Greene has written a careful study of rural churches in transition: *Ferment on the Fringe*, Christian Education Press, Philadelphia, \$2.00. The author is secretary for town and country church, of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, and was assisted by its Town and Country Committee. Part One: Guiding Principles. Part II: ten case studies of localities in several states.

Christ and the Hope of Glory, by John Knox (Abingdon, \$1.00), was written as the basis for his Ingersoll Lecture at Harvard in 1960. "Its mood is one of confession rather than of argument . . . within the context of the church's life and . . . interpreting its experience. I have no intention of entering the arena of philosophical debate."

Woodrow A. Geier has edited *A Perspective on Methodist Education*, a compilation of selected addresses by outstanding churchmen and educators in 1956-60. (P. N. Garber, J. O. Gross, L. C. Wicke, N. F. Ferré, H. C. Case, E. L. Smith, F. G. Ensley, etc.) Published by the Board of Education, The Methodist Church, Nashville, Tenn. \$2.00.

Roland Bainton has translated *Constantine and Religious Liberty*, by Hermann Doerries of Göttingen (Yale, \$4.00), based on Professor Doerries' Terry Lectures at Yale in 1958. "The author recovers a segment of a lost age and reveals its profound significance for us today." Yale has also published *St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch*, by Virginia Corwin of Smith College; the first full study in English of this significant martyr and theologian against his second-century background. (\$5.00)

A new enlarged edition of Stanford professor Kurt H. Reinhardt's scholarly but lucid *The Existentialist Revolt* has been brought out by Frederick Ungar Publishing Co. in New York (\$5.00 cl., \$1.75 pa.). The author goes along with many contemporary Thomists in holding that the existentialists have actually resurrected certain emphases that belong to the *philosophia perennis*. He treats Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Jaspers, and Marcel. He adds an appendix on Existentialist Psychotherapy, with special attention to Binswanger, Caruso, and an important volume edited by Rollo May—*Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1958).

E. H. L.





